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ABSTRACT

Alberta jurisdictions have been required since June 1985 to have in place and to implement a provincial policy on teacher evaluation. This study was designed to explore the impact of these policies on teachers and teaching and to study linkages between teacher evaluation and educational leadership at the school and systems levels. Methods used to gather data included an analysis of jurisdiction policies, a literature review, interviews with representatives of stakeholder organizations and school trustees, surveys of teachers and administrators, and case studies of teacher evaluation practices in nine jurisdictions chosen to reflect a diversity of contextual factors. In general, findings indicated the impact of provincial policy on teacher evaluation was positive in terms of quality of instruction, instructional supervision, and professional development. However, many teachers in the case studies believed that teacher evaluation had little long-term impact on their teaching. Following an overview chapter, the report is organized to replicate the steps of the research design. Chapter 2, the literature review, is followed by policy analysis in Chapter 3 and stakeholders' views in Chapter 4. Reports of the surveys in Chapters 5 and 6 are followed by case study findings in Chapters 7 to 14. Chapter 15 contains a review of the study, responses to study questions, and suggestions for action. (LL)

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A Study of the Impact of Alberta's Teacher Evaluation Policy

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Department of Education.

Toward Teacher Growth:

A Study of the Impact of Alberta's Teacher Evaluation Policy

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Acknowledgments

In 1989, Alberta Education, in cooperation with the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS), undertook a project to establish a framework for a study of the impact of teacher evaluation policies on teachers and teaching in Alberta. The Steering Committee and Research Team are indebted to this initiative for helping to establish the framework for the current study.

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Al Cleveland, Alberta School Boards Association
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Abstract

Alberta jurisdictions have been required since June 1985 to have in place and to implement a policy on teacher evaluation. This study was designed to explore the impact of these policies on teachers and teaching and to study linkages between teacher evaluation and educational leadership at the school and system levels.

The methods used to gather data included an analysis of jurisdiction policies, a literature review, interviews with representatives of stakeholder organizations and school trustees, surveys of teachers and administrators, and case studies of teacher evaluation practices in nine jurisdictions in the province chosen to reflect a diversity of contextual factors.

In general, since 1985, there has been an increase in the numbers of teacher evaluations conducted and in teachers' satisfaction with the process. Although most teachers are aware of the existence of their jurisdiction policy, few have read it and most depend for information on the discussions held with the evaluator at the beginning of the year in which they are to be evaluated. There is more discussion now than earlier about the teacher evaluation process and about teaching both at school and system levels. Evaluators visit classrooms more often and the initial heavy reliance on checklists as a means of documenting teacher behaviors has been replaced by greater emphasis on verbatim transcription of events as they occur. Some administrators employ a clinical supervision cycle of pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation discussion, but most hold a general meeting at the beginning of the year and then follow up a series of observations with one post-observation discussion of the preliminary report. Because of the legal ramifications involved in teacher dismissals, most policies describe detailed procedures to be used where the teacher is at risk of being declared incompetent. Trustees, some of whom thought that the major intent of their policy was to aid in the dismissal of incompetent teachers, considered that not enough emphasis had been placed on this task. Other trustees noted the benefits of what they perceived to be greater classroom involvement of principals and supervisors in the teacher evaluation process.

Although teachers in the survey thought that, overall, teacher evaluation had a positive impact on the quality of instruction, the quality of instructional supervision, and teacher professional development, many teachers in the case studies believed that teacher evaluation had little long-term impact on their teaching. They appreciated the feedback on their instructional strategies, curricular plans, and classroom discipline, but for some it was more of a confirmation of their present competencies than an opportunity to learn new strategies. Fairness was a major concern for most teachers.

A teacher evaluation model that emphasized technical competencies was welcomed by beginning teachers, but was considered inadequate in providing for professional growth of experienced teachers. Veteran teachers sought more information from subject specialists, greater autonomy in deciding on the focus of the evaluation, and appreciated the support provided where their growth was linked to school improvement goals. Experienced teachers who spoke positively about the benefits of teacher evaluation were most often in situations where the process of teacher evaluation was closely embedded in school and teacher development plans and was based on beliefs about the continuing professional growth of competent teachers.

In general, the impact of the provincial policy on teacher evaluation has been positive, but the teacher evaluation process is only beginning to evolve from mere compliance with board and provincial policies to becoming an integral part of the leadership goals for the school and the system. Although there are examples of teacher and school growth, critical questions remain. Evaluation is too frequently divorced from teachers' working lives. The focus on accountability is too prevalent and the focus on professional growth too infrequent. Teacher evaluation needs to be reconceptualized as one aspect of teaching that can help monitor professional judgment and encourage teacher growth. Where teacher professional development and teacher evaluation have been linked to individual and school improvement plans, educators, and students, and ultimately the community, have benefited from the commitment to excellence that the process engenders. A greater emphasis on this integrated process is recommended.

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Chapter 1

Overview

In 1984 the province of Alberta approved a teacher evaluation policy that stated that the performance of individual teachers and the quality of teaching practices across the province would be evaluated to assist in the provision of effective instruction to students and in the professional growth and development of teachers. Following the implementation of the provincial policy, which essentially required jurisdictions to develop policies appropriate to their contexts by June 1985, educational jurisdictions in Alberta have been involved in the development and subsequent implementation of a variety of teacher evaluation policies and procedures. Although two studies examined aspects of the development and implementation of the policy (Burger, 1988; Knight, 1990) and some surveys were conducted within individual jurisdictions (Gogowich, 1992; Hildebrandt, 1986; Foret & Hickey, 1987; Fegyverneki, 1990), no study of the impact of these policies on teachers and teaching throughout Alberta had been conducted. This study, therefore, was commissioned by Alberta Education.

Purpose of the Study

The three major purposes of this research study were:

1. To establish the impact of provincial and local teacher evaluation policies on teachers and teaching;
2. To provide guidelines for school system personnel in their continuing efforts to refine and improve teacher evaluation policies and practices; and
3. To describe the impact of system and school leadership on policy implementation and on teaching in schools.

Research Questions

In order to address these three purposes, a major research question was framed:

What have been the primary effects of teacher evaluation policies and practices on teachers, administrators, personnel practices, system planning, staff relations and any other related aspects of the educational system, and what recommendations for the improvement of teacher evaluation policies and practices are warranted?

From this initial question, eight more specific questions were developed to guide the study. They were grouped under four headings as follows:

Policy and Procedures

1. What standards, criteria, and/or indicators have been developed and are commonly used to make judgments about teacher performance?
2. Are data collected from a variety of sources including an examination of the processes used in student evaluation?
3. What student outcomes do teachers and evaluators consider in determining the effectiveness of teaching practices?
4. To what degree are the standards, criteria, and/or indicators being used to collect data about teacher performance acceptable to the teachers being evaluated?

Process

5. How is teacher evaluation conducted?

Impact

6. Is the practice of teacher evaluation improving the quality of instruction and education received by students?
7. To what extent do teachers use the results of teacher evaluations to reflect upon and/or to improve their teaching practices?

Linkages

8. In what ways do teachers and evaluators link the processes and outcomes of teacher evaluation to the process of educational leadership in the school and school system?

These questions guided the initial stages of the study, helped focus the various data collection strategies, and provided a framework for the discussion of the findings.

Design of the Study

A research design that focused on field methods was developed to respond to these questions. First, in order to inform the case study researchers, to highlight possible topics for exploration in the case studies, and to provide a context for these site-based initiatives, a review of recent literature on teacher evaluation and a documentary analysis of all jurisdictional teacher evaluation policies were undertaken. A complementary survey to ascertain the current perspectives and concerns of representatives of the stakeholder groups—Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, the Public School Boards Association, the Alberta Catholic School Boards Association, and the Conference of School Superintendents—was conducted also. Surveys, both by questionnaire to a random sample of teachers and administrators, and by telephone to a similar sample of trustees, were conducted to obtain information that might confirm the case study descriptions and the opinions of stakeholders.

Together these preliminary research activities raised questions about the assumptions held about teaching, questions of fairness in documentation and reporting, and the metaphors of evaluation evident in the literature.

In order to obtain highly descriptive accounts of the impact of teacher evaluation policies and practices on teachers and teaching, and of school and system leadership on policy implementation and on teaching in schools, case studies of nine jurisdictions were chosen as the major method for the study. The nine jurisdictions were chosen to reflect a spectrum of policies and procedures, size and type of jurisdiction, and contextual factors including geographic area, language mix, and population density.

The use of case study methodologies at multiple sites allowed for the application of different research strategies, specifically, interpretive studies, descriptive ethnography, action research, and narrative inquiry.

The focus of study at each case site varied from system-wide groups of teachers or administrators to school-based educators in two, or three different schools in a jurisdiction. All studies used some combination of observational, interview, and conversational data gathering strategies. Some researchers asked teachers to write on specific topics or to keep journals. Others used guided facilitation to explore with teachers and administrators the ways teacher evaluation policies could become a catalyst for their own professional growth. Interviews and conversations were usually taped and the transcripts or the subsequent analysis shared with participants. Throughout, researchers kept the research questions in mind but focused on exploring their participants' understandings of teacher evaluation.

At least two researchers were involved in each case study in order to model the collaborative nature of the work and to provide for verification and rigor in the analysis. The cases, surveys, and analyses also provided opportunities for the involvement of graduate research students as members of the team. As well, school and system educators were involved as co-researchers in a number of the cases.

Ethical Considerations

Because the study involved human subjects, ethics approval was obtained from a University of Alberta Ethics Review Committee. In order to provide anonymity to the respondents, pseudonyms for jurisdictions, schools, and individuals have been used throughout the report.

Overview of the Chapters

The remainder of this report is organized to replicate the steps of the research design. Chapter 2, the literature review, is followed first by the policy analysis in Chapter 3 and the stakeholders' views in Chapter 4. The reports of the surveys in Chapters 5 and 6 are followed by the case study findings in Chapters 7 to 14. Chapter 15 contains a review of the study, responses to the study questions, and suggestions for action.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review: Understanding the Impact of Teacher Evaluation Policies

The Analytic Framework

A teacher evaluation policy should be among the most important in the life of a school jurisdiction. It can be a means of sharing expectations about what constitutes good teaching, of recognizing and rewarding teacher performance, of linking personal and institutional goals, of enhancing teacher growth, of being accountable to the public (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990). But often teachers feel that evaluation is something done to them and they see the evaluator as a fault-finder (Gitlin, 1989). Teacher evaluation often is viewed as an intrusion into or a disruption of a teacher's work life; it is carried out in a perfunctory way, a hoop to be got through, as if with no expectation that it be a meaningful activity for any of the participants in the process (McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988). The purpose of teacher evaluation policies, then—not just the stated purpose, but what participants believe the purpose to be in practice—is an important element in understanding the impact of teacher evaluation policies.

A meaningful examination of the impact of teacher evaluation policies also requires understanding their underlying assumptions about the nature of teaching and teacher evaluation (Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). In fact, difficulties in implementing teacher evaluation policies and their relative lack of success in achieving stated goals often can be attributed to the differing assumptions among participants (McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988) and to the incongruence between espoused values and those actually embedded in the policies (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Bernstein, 1985).

Assumptions about teaching and teacher evaluation can be encompassed by an image or metaphor. Although there are many different metaphors of teaching in the literature, three have been chosen for critical examination because (a) they underlie, either explicitly or implicitly, many studies of teacher evaluation; (b) they are based on widely contrasting assumptions with respect to the nature of teaching and the nature and purpose of teacher evaluation; (c) many of the other images are closely related to one of the three selected; and (d) they appear meaningful to practitioners. These three metaphors are teaching as *technical expertise* (a combination of teaching as labor and teaching as craft: Wise et al., 1985; these two approaches were combined because they were not distinguishable in studies of teacher evaluation), *teaching as art* and *teaching as professional judgment*.

Structuring the literature review around three images or metaphors of teaching was a deliberate decision. Much of the literature on teacher evaluation is atheoretical and noncontextual. This makes it difficult to understand inconsistencies and conflicting findings. It also makes it difficult for policy makers and administrators to judge the applicability of findings to their local context. This approach, hopefully, will help to clarify issues for the reader and enhance understanding and interpretation of the data presented in the report.

The literature review contains four sections. The first three explore teacher evaluation from the perspective of each of the three metaphors. The underlying assumptions with respect to the nature of teaching and the purpose and nature of teacher evaluation are considered. Findings pertaining to the evaluation context and to the impact of teacher evaluation on the participants and on the organization are examined in some detail as well. In the final section there is a discussion of general issues arising from the literature review that are important to understanding the development, implementation, and impact of teacher evaluation policies.

Teaching as Technical Expertise

The metaphor of teaching as technical expertise traditionally has influenced educational policy in North America. Many of the recent state reform initiatives in the United States reflect this set of beliefs, as do some of the national reforms in the United Kingdom and Australia. Its appeal lies, at least in part, in its claims to rationality and objectivity. The strength of this appeal is shown by the fact that, in an exploratory examination of the teacher evaluation practices of 32 jurisdictions that were reputedly leaders in this area (Wise et al., 1985), the overwhelming majority were found to have designed their teacher evaluation systems in ways consistent with the teaching as technical expertise conceptualization.

Nature of Teaching

The underlying assumptions about the nature of teaching according to this metaphor are outlined in Wise et al. (1985). Teaching is a highly skilled activity and learning to teach involves acquiring, through practice, a set of complex skills. A good teacher has a large repertoire of skills and knows which is most effective in any given circumstance.

"Teaching effectiveness," a core element of this conceptualization, is based on the belief that it is possible to identify, define, and prescribe the skills that comprise good teaching. (Witness the popularity of teaching effectiveness programs based on the work of Madeline Hunter and on the ASCD materials.) The teacher is then responsible for executing these skills well and appropriately. In the Wise et al. (1985) study, the jurisdictions identified the areas encompassed by teaching effectiveness as teaching procedures, classroom management, knowledge of subject matter, personal characteristics, and professional responsibility.

Although none of the 32 jurisdictions involved in the Wise et al. (1985) exploratory study made explicit the assumptions underlying its approach to teacher evaluation, the assumptions implicit in most of their approaches were consistent with the teaching as technical expertise metaphor. For example, in Lake Washington, one of the four in-depth case studies conducted by Wise et al., staff development and evaluation and program development and evaluation were all rooted in Madeline Hunter's instructional theory into practice approach (ITIP), a clear indication of a belief in teaching as a set of skills. (Two of the other case studies were also most consistent with the conceptualization of teaching as technical expertise; one was consistent with the conceptualization of teaching as professional judgment.)

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Wise et al. (1985, p. 68) outlined four purposes that theoretically can be served by teacher evaluation, two related to accountability—individual personnel decisions (e.g., job status) and school status decisions (e.g., accreditation), and two related to improvement—individual teacher improvement and school improvement. Because each of these purposes requires different kinds of information, it would seem unlikely that all four could be served by the same teacher evaluation process, or at lease served equally. Yet the majority of administrators in the study indicated that the policy was intended to serve two or more of these purposes; they did not believe the policy had a primary purpose.

In practice, however, accountability with respect to individual personnel decisions appeared to be the primary purpose, and one consistent with the metaphor. School jurisdictions discharged their responsibility to be accountable to the public by measuring teacher performance regularly on those skills identified as essential to effective teaching and taking action (generally remediation; in extreme cases, dismissal) against those who did not meet standards. For the teachers who did meet the established standards, little direction was provided for continuing growth.

The Lake Washington case study is a good illustration of teacher evaluation for purposes of accountability, as opposed to improvement. The evaluation instrument was a checklist derived from ITIP principles. The evaluation data were used as follows:

> If the teacher receives less than a satisfactory rating on any criterion, the principal outlines a detailed personal development plan, which may include assistance from an experienced teacher, in-service classes, and specific reading assignments. If the teacher fails to improve, the principal places him or her on probation. During the probationary period, the principal meets weekly with the teacher to monitor progress toward specified performance levels. At the end of the semester, the principal, together with central office supervisors, decides the continued tenure of the teacher in the school district. (Wise et al. 1985, p. 81)

There could have been little doubt in the minds of these teachers that the purpose of evaluation was accountability.

Clearly where the primary purpose of teacher evaluation is accountability with respect to individual personnel decisions, "teacher evaluation processes must be capable of yielding fairly objective, standardized, and externally defensible information about teacher performance" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 68). This leads us to a consideration of the nature of teacher evaluation in the framework of teaching as technical expertise.

Nature of Teacher Evaluation

The approach to teacher evaluation consistent with the metaphor of teaching as technical expertise requires the (a) identification and description of the characteristics of effecting teaching, (b) development of indicators or other measures of teaching effectiveness, and (c) design of procedures that are fair to the teacher and as objective as possible. Checklists and satisfactory/unsatisfactory and other more complex rating scales generally derived from the research literature are common evaluation instruments in this approach. They are intended to reduce subjectivity and increase objectivity. There have even been calls for the testing of teachers in basic literacy and mathematical skills, although in one state such testing appeared to have little impact on either identification of incompetent teachers or improvement of teaching (Cameron, 1985).

Medley, Coker, and Soar (1984) have argued that rating systems are neither objective nor valid; instead they have proposed evaluation procedures that are performance-based and empirically tested, and that collect data by means of structured observations. Their model involves four steps:

1. Setting, defining, or agreeing upon a *task* to be performed.
2. Making a documentary, quantifiable *record* of the behavior of the candidate while the task is performed.
3. Quantifying the record, that is, deriving a *score* or set of scores from it.
4. Comparing the scores with the predetermined *standard*. (p. 23)

In the Wise et al. (1985) study, the instruments on which teacher evaluation was based generally were developed by a committee consisting of representatives of different stakeholder groups (e.g., teachers, school administrators, central office administrators, parents) over a considerable period of time. The teacher evaluation procedures also were similar across the 32 jurisdictions—requirements for preconferences, classroom observations, postconferences, and written reports were virtually universal, although the frequency of evaluations differed—and consistent with what Tracy and MacNaughton (1989) have termed as neo-traditional approaches to clinical supervision. Only about a quarter of the jurisdictions included some kind of self-evaluation component, and far fewer looked at student achievement. In the great majority of these jurisdictions, teacher evaluation was carried out by the school administrator, who reported the results to either the personnel or the staff development supervisor in the central office. Rarely was there a line item for teacher evaluation in district budgets.

In the teaching as technical expertise metaphor the person conducting the evaluation plays a key role, regardless of the instrument used, and the teacher plays a relatively passive role. The teacher has little say about what data are collected and how they are interpreted. For all intents and purposes, control of both the process and the report lies in the hands of the evaluator. It is not surprising, then, that teachers evaluated by such approaches express high levels of concern about fairness issues and about the qualifications of the evaluator for the task.

Peterson and Comeaux (1990) asked teachers to assess several teacher evaluation systems based on different conceptualizations of teaching. The participants tended to judge evaluation approaches consistent with the teaching as technical expertise metaphor on fairness issues more than on improvement issues. They judged these evaluation systems to be concerned with accountability; they gave higher ratings to those systems that involved more than one evaluator, that had clear and specific criteria (to limit the influence of the evaluator's personal preferences), that did not result in an overall rating of acceptable/unacceptable, and that provided for a sufficient number of observations. Their major concern was that the behaviors examined be truly indicative of effective teaching. To teachers the most serious drawback of these approaches was that they did not adequately take contextual factors (e.g., teacher goals, the nature of students) into consideration, and they did not contribute to improvement and professional development.

Evaluation Context

In spite of the similarities in design of the teacher evaluation policies in the 32 jurisdictions in the Wise et al. (1985) exploratory study, there were differences in implementation, and subsequently on impact. The importance of the evaluation context was underscored by the findings of the four case studies. The implementation differences centered on evaluator training, integration of teacher evaluation with other district activities, and consideration of teacher evaluation in administrator evaluation. Others (e.g., Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988) also have identified these features of the evaluation context as significant.

The training evaluators receive has been found to vary from virtually none—perhaps an overview of procedures, forms, due dates—to intensive inservice and/or ongoing discussions of the purpose of evaluation, report-writing, observing, issues, links with effective teaching programs and with the curriculum (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; Wise et al., 1985). The reason that evaluator training was important is simple: Unless the evaluators knew what they were looking for and were consistent in their ratings, they were not credible to the teachers; if teachers did not trust the evaluators, they did not act on the results of the evaluation.

Related to the issue of evaluator training was that of school administrator evaluation (since that is who generally evaluates teachers). Coleman and LaRocque (1990) and Wise et al. (1985) found that administrator evaluation practices were less well developed than teacher evaluation practices and rarely linked to teacher evaluation. Both teachers and administrators seemed to take teacher evaluation more seriously when administrators were accountable for their teacher evaluation practices. Again the Lake Washington example is a case in point. School administrators were trained in ITIP, and their ability in the areas of teacher evaluation and staff development were major components of their own evaluation.

Another significant factor in the success of teacher evaluation was the extent to which it was integrated with curriculum goals and staff development plans, although such integration was infrequent (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; Wise et al., 1985). For example, in the Lake Washington case study, the provision of training in ITIP for all teachers, coupled with ongoing support for staff development, were critical factors in the success of the teacher evaluation system. Furthermore, there was a cadre of experienced ITIP trainers available to assist teachers whose performance was not satisfactory; the district assumed the costs for releasing the ITIP trainers from their classroom responsibilities. Where curriculum goals had been incorporated into the teacher evaluation process, the salience of both was found to have increased; moreover, evaluation was considered more meaningful because it provided direction for classroom planning. Similarly, where the results of teacher evaluation formed the basis of the planning and design of at least some staff development activities, both activities were judged to be more salient and meaningful.

Perhaps the disconnectedness of teacher evaluation is not so important if the purpose is solely accountability; however, the "general lack of integration among teacher evaluation, staff development, and district curriculum guides raise[s] questions about the effectiveness with which teacher evaluation activities [can] address such purposes as staff development and school improvement" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 74).

Impact of Teacher Evaluation

In the Wise et al. (1985) study, participants believed that teacher evaluation was a powerful way of influencing instructional improvement, even when they recognized the need to revise current practice in their own system. They identified a number of positive consequences of teacher evaluation: more teacher-administrator discussion about teaching; greater teacher awareness of instructional goals and classroom practice; increased sense of professionalism; affirmation of good current teaching practices; better supervision of beginning teachers; "counseling out" of certificated teachers who were no longer suited to the profession. In a few districts participants felt instructional practice and student achievement had improved, due at least in part to teacher evaluation. It must be noted, however, that it was only with respect to personnel decisions that evidence other than the perceptions of the participants was provided. Consider that in the Lake Washington case study the major impact was the counseling out of about 40 teachers over a four-year period (i.e., about 5% of the total teaching force). This is further evidence that the major purpose *in practice* of teacher evaluation systems consistent with the teaching as technical expertise was accountability; the major evidence of success, the counseling out or remediation of teachers in difficulty.

Issues

There are a number of issues inherent in teacher evaluation practices based on the metaphor of teaching as technical expertise.

For those who believe it is possible to identify the skills or behaviors that constitute effective teaching, the major issue has been to ensure that teacher evaluation procedures are valid, objective, and reliable. For example, Collins (1990a) has demonstrated the powerful influence of the background of the evaluator on what is observed and how it is assessed. Medley et al. (1984) challenged checklist and rating scales on these criteria and instead advocated structured and quantifiable observations of teacher performance. Support for their position was provided by Hoover and O'Shea (1987), who found that evaluators using an observational instrument attended to more teaching behaviors and presented a broader conceptualization of teaching than did evaluators who used a criterion checklist. On the other hand, the teachers in the Peterson and Comeaux (1990) study were critical of instruments derived from the effective teaching literature because the indicators did not take into account adequately the context. Critical theorists such as Gitlin and Smyth (1990) have challenged the very assumption that any rating scale or observation instrument, however scientifically derived, can be objective and value-free. In another article (1988) they severely criticized traditional approaches to teacher evaluation as "attempts to reassert social control over teachers" based on "technocratic rationality, impoverished epistemological assumptions about the nature of teacher and restricted and authoritarian view of pedagogy" (p. 237).

For others the first and foremost issue has been the conceptualization itself of teaching as technical expertise. It is difficult to remain optimistic about the possibility of defining good teaching, of establishing the standards against which teachers are to be judged. Research is calling into question the assumptions concerning the predictability of classroom environments, the effectiveness of teaching skills with different groups of students, the continuing effectiveness of the same skills utilized over a period of time, and the different, but equally desirable, results of different teaching behaviors. As Wise et al. (1985) concluded from their review of this research:

> Assertions that discrete sets of behaviors consistently lead to increased student performance ... have been countered by inconsistent and often contradictory findings that undermine faith in the outcomes of simple process-product research.... Researchers have found that effective teaching behaviors vary for students of differing socioeconomic, mental, and psychological characteristics ... and for different grade levels and subject areas.... Teaching behaviors that have sometimes proved effective when used in moderation can produce significant and negative results when overused ... or when applied in the wrong circumstances.... Instructional acts that seem to increase achievement on basic skills tests and factual examinations in many cases differ distinctly from those that seem to increase complex cognitive learning, problem-solving ability, and creativity. (Wise et al., 1985, p. 67)

Even in the Lake Washington case study, where the ITIP philosophy permeated staff and program development and evaluation with considerable success, there was a recognition of the limitation of conceptualizing teaching as technical expertise. More specifically, the need for the teacher evaluation system to be responsive to the different levels of knowledge and skills of individual teachers, to the different contexts in which teachers find themselves, and to the desire for continuing professional growth of teachers whose performance was considered satisfactory was acknowledged.

Given that it is possible to establish a set of standards or criteria, securing the agreement of the teachers being evaluated has been found to be another matter (Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). Whether student achievement results should be used as an indicator of teaching effectiveness has been particularly problematic (Redfield, 1988; Stark & Lowther, 1984). Seeking teacher input during the development of the policy, involving teachers on the policy development committee, and holding meetings to explain the policy have been common strategies for creating agreement about both the characteristics of effective teaching and their indicators (McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). There has been considerable evidence, however, that these strategies are not sufficient unless embedded in an understanding that teacher evaluation policy is a matter of culture building (McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; Peterson & Comeaux, 1990; Wise et al., 1985).

The issue of administrator commitment has been found to be crucial to the existence of a culture supportive of teacher evaluation (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; Wise et al., 1985). In various studies, central office administrators demonstrated their commitment through their active involvement in at least some aspects of the process, for example, by engaging in ongoing discussion about the nature of teaching and of teacher evaluation. They also demonstrated their commitment when they sought to integrate teacher evaluation with other district activities, when they required and provided for adequate training for evaluators, and when they stood behind the evaluators who had made difficult decisions. The commitment of school administrators was evidenced in their preparation for the evaluator role, in their consistency in conducting evaluations, and in their resolve in conducting evaluations. The last point has been found to be problematic: Collegial relations with staff were essential to the success of many school administrator activities, yet there was the potential for conflict during teacher evaluation that seriously might have jeopardized collegiality (Wise et al., 1985).

Teaching as Art

The metaphor of teaching as art rests on its recognition of the importance of "intuition, creativity, improvisation, and expressiveness" (Gage, 1978, p. 15) to good teaching. The individuality of the teacher and the uniqueness of each class of students is acknowledged. Furthermore, a fundamental element of this conceptualization of teaching is the empowerment of teachers (Gitlin, 1990; Gitlin & Goldstein, 1987; Gitlin & Smyth, 1990; Smyth, 1988).

Because it denies the traditional markers of accountability, it raises concerns for some policy makers and administrators.

Nature of Teaching

According to the teaching as art metaphor, teaching is highly individualistic, dependent on the personal resources of the teacher and on his or her interactions with students, individually and as a class (Wise et al., 1985; Gitlin, 1989; Gitlin & Goldstein, 1987; Gitlin & Smyth, 1990; Smyth, 1988). Because teaching is contextual and historical, teachers must enjoy considerable autonomy in the classroom. Teachers do utilize specific skills and they are influenced by professional knowledge, but personal judgment about instructional goals and strategies is at the crux of good teaching.

Artists, at least good artists, are expected to maintain their integrity, in spite of criticism or pressure from others, and in some sense to be their own harshest critics. The teaching as art metaphor places analogous expectations on teachers. In fact, critical theorists have argued that good teaching includes but goes beyond concern for instructional goals and strategies to a consideration of "political, ethical, and moral questions" (Gitlin & Smyth, 1990, p. 83), of "what should be done" rather than "how it can be done" (Bullough, Goldstein, & Holt, 1984, p. 7). The moral dimensions of teaching have received considerable attention in recent years (see, e.g., the series of articles in Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990).

An example might help to distinguish critical reflection in this metaphor from that in teaching as technical expertise. Consider student misbehavior. From the latter perspective the instrumental aspects of this issue would be emphasized: for example, what should the teacher do to restore order? What classroom management strategies should the teacher implement to prevent, or at least minimize, disruption in the future? From the former perspective the value aspects of the issue would also be emphasized: for example, why or to whom is a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student important? What systemic explanations might there be for student misbehavior? How can these explanations help inform the most appropriate response?

This view of teaching clearly has implications for the purpose and nature of teacher evaluation.

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

According to this metaphor, the purpose of teacher evaluation is to encourage critical reflection about practice—in its moral and ethical dimensions as well as

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technical—in order to improve it. The emphasis is on self-awareness, understanding, insight. Accountability is of concern, but it is viewed as responsibility in the Kerr (1987) sense: Teachers demonstrate their responsibility to the public by being critically reflective about their teaching and constantly seeking ways to improve. This view is predicated on the assumption that teachers cannot be held responsible for the outcomes of schooling if they do not have control over their own work (Gitlin & Smyth, 1990).

Critical theorists have argued that as teachers become empowered they will begin to challenge school structures and ideologies, to critically question why things are the way they are, whose interests are served, and so forth. To them the purpose of teacher evaluation is "to promote change by empowering teachers" to examine "the relationship between educational means and ends and therefore [expose] the political, moral, and ethical implications of schooling" (Gitlin, 1989, p. 322). Clearly, if social change is an expected outcome, then others (students, parents) must be included in the discourse.

Nature of Teacher Evaluation

Teacher knowledge is central to systems of teacher evaluation influenced by the teaching as art metaphor (Giltin & Smyth, 1990). Such systems entail "the study of holistic qualities rather than analytically derived quantities, the use of 'inside' rather than externally objective points of view" (Gage, 1978, p. 15). Perhaps their most important characteristic is that the substance or matter of evaluation is rooted in the teacher's own practice rather than externally imposed criteria. Gitlin and Smyth (1990) have argued that the very nature of the scientific process of deriving indicators of teaching effectiveness ensures that the least interesting and significant questions are addressed and the most pressing ignored.

Teacher evaluation systems consistent with the teaching as art perspective try to rectify what are seen as weaknesses in traditional approaches by emphasizing what teachers think as well as what they do, by adopting an historical and contextual approach, and by ensuring that the participants in the process have an equal, reciprocal, and collaborative relationship (Gitlin & Smyth, 1990). Consequently, these systems typically involve peer observations, dialogical conversations, and self-reflection (Gitlin, 1989; Gitlin & Goldstein, 1987; Gitlin & Smyth, 1990; Smyth, 1988). The teachers may collect and analyze a variety of other data—student test scores, parent survey results—but they decide what it is they need to know, when they need it, and why they need it. Administrators encourage and facilitate teacher evaluation efforts but are not involved in the evaluation process.

Giltin (1989) used the term "horizontal evaluation" to describe a process of teacher evaluation consistent with the teaching as art conceptualization (see Gitlin & Goldstein, 1987, for a description and analysis of horizontal evaluation). In his study, a diverse group of 20 teachers attending a graduate class broke into groups of two or three of their own choosing. Once a month for eight months each teacher observed and was observed by his or her partner. Each observation period was followed by an audiotaped discussion or dialogical inquiry. A dialogical conversation is not simply talk. It has the following characteristics: "Both participants see the discourse as important and have a say in determining its course.... Dialogue does not pit one actor against another but rather enables participants to work together to understand the subject being discussed.... Dialogue does not assume equality of perception or judgment between actors, but rather enables participants to work together to understand the topic under discussion.... The aim of dialogue is to make prejudgments apparent and to 'test them critically in the course of inquiry'" (Gitlin, 1990, pp. 540-541). At the end of the eight months the teachers reflected on the evaluation experience.

Although initially the observations focused on specific skills, they tended increasingly to focus on broader questions (such as opportunities for students to structure their own learning). The observations were enhanced by the dialogue between the teachers, which encouraged the teachers to reflect on what they were trying to accomplish, the impact of their teaching strategies on the students, the values that guided their practice, and the like. This two-way communication between equal participants who "work[ed] together to scrutinize teaching and schooling" was an important element of horizontal evaluation (Gitlin, 1989, p. 322). It was not that all the observers were teachers that was significant; it was that the relationship was equal and reciprocal. To Gitlin and Smyth (1990), replacing the principal with a master teacher would not constitute dialogical conversation; as long as one participant was deemed an expert, it created an imbalance in the power relationship.

Evaluation Context

Initially the teachers in Gitlin's (1989) study assumed that evaluation was something done to them, that the evaluator was a fault-finder, and that they were needy recipients; at the end they saw the possibility of evaluation to be an enabling process. They needed the experience of participating in peer observations and dialogical conversations to learn how to, and to develop confidence in their ability to, interact in this way. The peer observers needed time to develop trust in one another.

We may infer from Gitlin's study that the success of teacher evaluation systems consistent with the teaching as art metaphor depends on a number of organizational factors. Opportunity must be provided for peer observations and dialogical conversations. Time must be allowed for teachers to learn how to participate in such teacher evaluation systems; guidance in recognizing taken-for-granted notions about schooling, in challenging the commonplaces, may have to be provided. There must be trust between the peer observers, based on an equal, reciprocal, and collaborative relationship. Administrators must trust the teachers to be responsible for their own professional growth, support and facilitate peer observations and dialogical conversations, and be open to the changes in school organization the teachers suggest as a result of their critical reflections.

Gitlin himself in a later article (1990) described a supportive context for horizontal evaluation:

> Dialogical forms of evaluation must become part of a larger reform effort. Because productive models of change suggest an entirely different teacher role—one that includes increased responsibility in terms of decision making and the need to critically reflect on views and practices—school structures must be altered in line with this change. Not only must teachers be given time away from students, but they must be given some sort of paid sabbatical to do in-depth studies. Lines of communication must also be reopened among parents, teachers, administrators, and students such that democratic relations guide the direction of the school. (pp. 560-561)

Impact of Teacher Evaluation

The most important impact of teacher evaluation systems embedded in the teaching as art metaphor has to do with a sense of empowerment and professional growth. For example, what teachers in the Peterson and Comeaux (1990) study especially valued about such approaches to evaluation was the encouragement of critical self-reflection.

The teachers in Gitlin's (1989) study became more willing to open their classroom and make more public their everyday practices. They began to question their practice more deeply and from different perspectives, which facilitated an almost exclusive concern with technical issues to include issues of value and educational ends. For example, an initial focus on classroom reward systems led to an examination of approaches to controlling students and their impact on the quality of student work. These teachers became less concerned with controlling students and more concerned with actively involving students in their own learning. They were rethinking their expectations of students, learning to distinguish "between a quiet student and one who is passive, a busy student and one who is learning, and an obedient student and one who is involved in an educative process" (Gitlin, 1989, p. 327).

The teachers in Gitlin's study also began to question their use of language, especially their heavy reliance on slogans and jargon (e.g., cooperative learning, child-centered). They analyzed and probed the meaning of these terms in and for practice, comparing intents with reality, with the consequence that by the end of the eight months they were more inclined to act on understanding than out of habit. They "generated a kind of practitioner knowledge that empowered them to discuss these common issues" with others and to "reshape their own classrooms and contribute in important ways to school debates that focus on issues that go beyond the classroom context" (Gitlin, 1989, p. 326). For example, some of these teachers started to analyze the assumptions and philosophy of required textbooks; others the tendency of teachers and schools to be competitive rather than collaborative; still others their district evaluation policy.

Issues

For proponents of evaluation embedded in the teaching as art metaphor, the critical issues in traditional and typical approaches that must be addressed include: the separation of knowing from doing; evaluation as technique (i.e., the use of checklists and rating scales); the ahistorical nature of knowing (i.e., no rationale for the items included in the instruments; no analysis of the assumptions implicit in the checklists and rating scales); evaluation as monologue (i.e., one-way communication from the evaluator to the person being evaluated); and the fostering of individualism in schools (i.e., the hierarchical and isolated nature of the process). (These ideas are developed more fully in Gitlin & Smyth, 1990.) The challenge then becomes to create an educational community that encourages peer observation, dialogical conversation, and critical self-reflection within the framework of schools as they currently exist with their hierarchical relationships and teacher isolation. Another challenge is the extension of the dialogue to include other teachers, students, and parents, to increase the likelihood "that concerns that reside outside an individual teacher's classroom will be examined. This is to acknowledge that there is more to school change than merely altering how teachers understand teaching and what they do in the classroom. In particular, structures that support constrained notions of teaching and learning need to be contested" (Gitlin & Smyth, 1990, p. 93).

Even people who are sympathetic to the teaching as art metaphor may be troubled by approaches to accountability that seem to put so much power in the hands of teachers. Although most criticisms of teacher evaluation are directed toward those systems based on conceptualizations of teaching as technical expertise, the attention paid to professional standards and responsiveness to public demands by proponents of the teaching as professional judgment metaphor suggest a recognition of possible limitations of the teaching as art perspective.

Teaching as Professional Judgment

The metaphor of teaching as professional judgment has been highlighted in recent years by the school restructuring movement in the United States (Boyer, 1990; Bridges, 1990; Conley, 1990; Gideonse, 1990; Johnson, 1990; Johnston, 1989; Koretz, 1990; Metz, 1990; Shanker, 1990; Sykes, 1990a, 1990b). Its emphasis on professional judgment and the collaborative involvement of teachers in structuring the nature of their work and their workplace is appealing to teachers. Its concern for establishing a professional body of knowledge and professional standards may make it appealing to policy makers.

According to Darling-Hammond (1989),

> Professionalism depends on the affirmation of three principles in the conduct and governance of an occupation:
>
> 1. Knowledge is the basis for permission to practice and for decisions that are made with respect to the unique needs of clients.
>
> 2. The practitioner pledges his [sic] first concern to the welfare of the client.
>
> 3. The profession assumes collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal, and enforcement of professional standards of practice and ethics. (pp. 66-67)

Nature of Teaching

Knowledge is as critical to conceptualizations of teaching as professional judgment as it is to conceptualization of teaching as art, although there is greater emphasis on a shared body of knowledge from which a set of professional standards can be developed and less emphasis on political analysis. For example, "To exercise sound professional judgment, the teacher must master a body of theoretical knowledge as well as a range of techniques" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 65). In this metaphor, too, professional knowledge is seen to be embedded in context and is concerned with understanding and insight (Greene, 1989). The teaching as professional judgment metaphor views the professional knowledge that is the basis of teacher decision making as collaborative rather than individual—knowledge is developed by teachers collectively and shared among teachers, certainly in the school and more broadly (Greene, 1989; Lightfoot, 1989; Schon, 1983; Shulman, 1987). This professional knowledge is concerned largely with the conditions and situations teachers encounter in their daily work lives, although it is certainly informed by research findings and other external sources (Lieberman & Miller, 1990).

Another central consideration in the conceptualization of teaching as professional judgment is that of professional standards, although standards are viewed differently from the way they are in the teaching as technical expertise metaphor. In this case the standards arise from the critical examination of the contextualized knowledge of the members of the profession; in fact, these standards in some way define and unite the members of the profession. As Greene (1989) explained:

> The crucial point is that, for standards to be significant in individual lives, people do indeed have to adopt them, to choose them, to decide to live and work with what they take them to mean. They have to perceive themselves as participants or would-be participants in a community identified by what have been called "acceptable criteria" or by distinguishable norms.... What seems fundamental is the recognition that the standards governing it [the community] have been defined and continue to be defined out of the particular experiences of those who affirm their membership. (p. 10)

Shulman (1987) distinguished between standards and standardization. Similarly, Greene (1989) argued "for the kinds of standards that make possible an ongoing civil conversation, a dialogue that reconciles differences and that leads, with occasions always open for renewal, to the constitution of a common world" (p. 13). Lightfoot (1989), too, expressed concern about the tendency for standards to be rigid, narrow, decontextualized, and exclusionary. She argued for notions of standards and accountability that "encourage and inspire school people; that allow for a pluralistic response to the pursuit of goals; and that standards need to be systematically reviewed and renewed in order to avoid typical bureaucratic anachronisms. In addition ... standards need to reflect a broad range of educational commitments and goals" (p. 14). In fact she chose to talk about *goodness* rather than *excellence* because:

> If one is looking for goodness, rather than excellence, in schools, one sees a different reality. Goodness refers to the complex culture of schools—to academic achievement, of course, but also the craft and aesthetics of pedagogy; to the moral tone of the institution; to the quality of the human encounter; and to the nature of organizational authority.... This does not mean that prevailing definitions of *good* to not struggle for prominence; nor does it mean that we can avoid the possibility that the educational endeavor threatens to be reduced to what John Dewey referred to as "easy beauty"—a comfortable but superficial prettiness; a compromised standard devoid of any real substance. (p. 6)

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation, from the perspective of this metaphor, is to encourage teacher reflection and dialogue about practice, in order to contribute to the development of shared working knowledge. There is an expectation "that standards of professional knowledge and practice can be developed and assessed and that their enforcement will ensure competent teaching" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 65). Teachers, however, are involved in setting those standards, the focus is on judgment rather than skills, and the context within which teachers make pedagogical judgments is integral to the assessment of teacher performance.

From the perspective of teaching as professional judgment, the dual purposes of accountability and improvement are seen as closely intertwined and mutually supportive. McLaughlin and Pfiefer (1988) in particular have challenged the common wisdom that the two purposes are incompatible:

> We conclude that an evaluation system built on an assumption of incompatibility will be unable to serve either purpose as effectively as it might. We have seen that accountability and improvement are harmonious and reinforcing goals, not competing objectives. Accountability of a fundamental kind—organizational control of the most fundamental stripe—occurs *through* strategies based in improvement or learning because it is rooted in professional norms and values. (pp. 82-83)

They attributed the success of teacher evaluation—whether it become a meaningful, professional activity or a pro forma, going through the hoops one—to the organizational climate and context.

Nature of Teacher Evaluation

Darling-Hammond (1989) has summarized the nature and rationale of approaches to accountability in the teaching as professional judgement conceptualization thus:

> Professional accountability seeks to support practices that are client-oriented and knowledge-based. It starts from the premise that parents, when they are compelled to send their children to a public school, have the right to expect that they will be under the care of competent people who are committed to using the best knowledge available to meet the individual needs of those children.... Professional accountability assumes that, since teaching is too complex to be hierarchically prescribed and controlled, it must be structured so that practitioners can make responsible decisions, both individually and collectively.... Professionals learn from each other, norms are established and transmitted, problems are exposed and tackled, parents' concerns are heard, and students' needs are better met. (p. 78)

In their case study of four school districts in which the teacher evaluation system promoted growth as well as accountability, McLaughlin and Pfeifer (1988) identified as critical the encouragement of teacher reflection, the provision of the opportunity to rethink goals and priorities. A great many specific techniques for encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice, to assess their practice within context, and to discuss pedagogy with others are being explored, for example, teacher portfolios (Bird, 1990; Collins, 1990b; Lyons, 1992; Haertel, 1991); various forms of self-assessment; teacher journaling (Adams, 1989); classroom discourse analysis involving stimulated recall using videotapes of lessons (Lindsay, 1990; Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). The most common, however, involve classroom observation (often by an administrator and/or peer) and discussion that allows the teacher to explore goals, intents, rationale, values—not in general, but with reference to specific happenings during the observation (see Stodolsky, 1984, for the limitations of classroom observation). Teachers and administrators are equally important in this approach to teacher evaluation, which Tracy and MacNaughton (1989) have termed neoprogressive clinical supervision, and Smyth (1985) critical clinical supervision.

Although teacher evaluation embedded in the teaching as professional judgment metaphor is a recent notion, there are a few descriptions of systems evolving in this direction (the case studies, especially Moraga, in McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; O'Leary & Fenton, 1990; the Greenwich case study in Wise et al., 1985). The common features of these evolving approaches to teacher evaluation included some kind of goal-setting activity between the teacher and the evaluator; the active involvement of the teacher throughout the process; multiple sources of information; and interactions between the evaluator and the teacher akin to the dialogical conversations described by Gitlin (1989).

In many respects this approach is similar to that embodied by the teaching as art metaphor, except that the expected consequence is professional standards rather than social critique. It can be distinguished from approaches derived from the teaching as technical expertise metaphor by its emphasis on teacher judgment rather than skills, its focus on context, and the active role teachers play in the entire process.

Evaluation Context

Any discussion of teacher evaluation consistent with the teaching as professional judgment metaphor emphasizes the critical importance of the evaluation context. The following features are seen as essential: that opportunities be provided for peer observation and for collaborative activity that encourages the development of shared knowledge about teaching; that administrators be supportive of and involved in these collaborative activities; that teacher evaluation be valued in the jurisdiction and be seen to be valued; that teacher evaluation be integrally linked with other important jurisdiction policies and practices such as staff development and goal setting.

More generally, for the teacher evaluation process to encourage and support reflective practice, the organizational context must be "a learning system within which individuals could surface conflicts and dilemmas and subject them to productive public enquiry, a learning system conducive to the continual criticism and restructuring of organizational principles and values" (Schon, 1983, pp. 335-336). The design of the teacher evaluation process must allow for the critique, refinement, and sharing of the professional knowledge base. McLaughlin and Pfiefer (1988) wrote extensively about the desirable evaluation context:

> A teacher evaluation system based in common values, shared goals, open communication, and frequent interaction about classroom activities supports the type of performance most likely to reflect organizational goals and standards of best practice when teachers face students alone in the classroom.... [Such strategies] provide the kinds of professional stimulation and feedback that support individual growth consistent with institutional goals and values. (p. 84)
>
> In a climate of trust and support, face-to-face communication, and commitment to the evaluation process, teacher evaluation generates information that identifies areas of institutional strength and weakness, directions for new activities, training efforts, and revisions of existing policy. Every evaluation thus comprises a test of the system.... It institutionalizes the inherent tension between the individual and the organization, confronting the status quo head on. (p. 86)
>
> Teacher evaluation conducted in an institutional context of mutual trust and support for evaluation thus initiates a cycle of reflection and self-evaluation at both the individual and institutional level. It not only provides feedback regarding individual and organizational effectiveness, but it also serves as an institutional trigger to stimulate routine reflection about the assumptions, norms and values that support professional practice in a school district.... Evaluation in this context is *culture-oriented*, not *past-focused*; it is *investment-centered*, not *pay-off centered* (see Kanter, 1984). That is, it rewards efforts to change and grow rather than to reward past "satisfactory" performance. (p. 87)

Stiggins and Duke (1988) and Fenton, Stofflet, Straugh, and Durant (1989) have identified similar features of the evaluation context as essential for meaningful evaluation consistent with the teaching as professional judgment metaphor.

Impact of Teacher Evaluation

In the Peterson and Comeaux (1990) study, the most highly rated of the four evaluation systems was the Alternate Assessment. It involved the teacher being videotaped while teaching a lesson and then afterward viewing the videotape and discussing the lesson with the principal. The teachers appreciated this evaluation process because it "accurately portrays what went on in the classroom" (p. 15), thereby allowing teachers to see themselves as others saw them; it encouraged self-evaluation and critical reflection on practice; it provided an opportunity to explain teacher decisions and actions, with the possibility of beginning an ongoing dialogue about teaching with others; and, most importantly, it served improvement and professional development purposes. The teachers in the study, however, did raise the concern that this process might be threatening to teachers unused to being observed and to discussing pedagogy. Nevertheless, they believed that they learn what to improve and how to improve when the process focuses on what classroom life is really like and when they are able to interact with more than one person, especially peers.

The case studies of teacher evaluation approaching the professional model (Fenton et al., 1989; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; O'Leary & Fenton, 1990; Wise et al., 1985) identified as a major impact the focus on critical reflection and improvement of practice. But there were other impacts as well: increased collegiality among teachers and between administrators and teachers; greater commitment to the district; a greater linking of individual growth with school improvement; more meaningful staff development; a heightened sense of professionalism and the concomitant sense of efficacy. The only negative impact noted was in the Greenwich case (Wise et al., 1985) when, during a time of retrenchment, the teacher evaluation system failed to yield sufficiently comparative data to facilitate decisions about layoffs.

Issues

Teacher evaluation systems based on the teaching as professional judgment metaphor only recently have been developed and implemented, and fewer still have been documented. Consequently, there is not a large body of criticism. It is possible, however, to anticipate at least three significant issues.

Certainly a major issue is how to keep the focus on the development of practice, both at the individual and at the institutional level, to prevent either the imposition of standards that restrict rather than inspire or the return to skill-based criteria. This depends largely on the creation and maintenance of an evaluation context like that described above, which is in itself a challenge.

Equally important is the maintenance of a watchful and critical stance to ensure the fullest possible knowledge base and not the legitimation of "the idiosyncratic or whimsical preferences of individual classroom teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 1989, p. 67).

The third issue pertains to the inclusion of student, parent, and community voices in the development of shared working knowledge, the responsiveness of professionals to public concerns. Teachers who are themselves being empowered by this approach to teacher evaluation must allow others to be heard in the process.

Issues Across Conceptualizations

Issues specific to each conceptualization of teaching have been discussed in previous sections of the chapter, but there are issues that run across the three conceptualizations. One has to do with the term *accountability*—there are many cries for increased accountability and yet "in the current debates about accountability, cacophony rules. There is little agreement, and perhaps even less clear thinking, about what accountability means, to whom it is owed, and how it can be operationalized" (Darling-Hammond, 1989, p. 60). The portrait of the state of teacher evaluation painted by Wise et al. (1985) is no more encouraging:

> Our preliminary assessment of local teacher evaluation activities led us to conclude that LEAs [local education agencies] do not agree on what constitutes the best practice for instrumentation, frequency of evaluation, the role of the teacher in the process, or how the information could or should inform other district activities. In our view, this lack of consensus signals more than differences in notions of practice appropriate to a particular setting.
>
> These differences, we believe, indicate that teacher evaluation presently is an underconceptualized and underdeveloped activity. (p. 75)

One way of attempting to get a handle on these broad, overarching issues is to focus on subissues. Wise et al. (1985) have identified five such issues with respect to the design and implementation of a teacher evaluation policy: compatibility, commitment, congruence, competence, and collaboration. Their discussion of these issues has been well substantiated in Canadian and United States literature (e.g., Braskamp, Brandenburg, & Ory, 1984; Chirnside, 1984; Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Conley, 1987; Fenton et al., 1989; Freer & Dawson, 1985; Huddle, 1985; Johnston, 1989; Larson, 1984; Manatt, 1984; McGreal, 1983; McLaughlin, 1984; McLaughlin & Pfiefer, 1988; MacNaughton, Tracy, & Rogus, 1984; Peterson & Comeaux, 1990; Root & Overly, 1990; Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985; Stiggins & Duke, 1988; Thorson, Miller, & Bellon, 1987). Furthermore, studies by Townsend (1984), Prince (1985), the Advisory Committee's Report (1986), Babiuk (1987), and Burger (1988), implicitly or explicitly, have confirmed the salience of these issues specifically in the Alberta context.

Compatibility

There is widespread agreement that a teacher evaluation system is more likely to succeed if it suits a district's fundamental operating assumptions, that is, if it complements its "educational goals, management style, conception of teaching, and community values" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 103).

Teacher evaluation is more likely to have a positive impact on practice when it supports and is supported by other district activities. For example, it makes little sense to evaluate teachers using an instrument derived from principles of direct instruction when the focus of professional development workshops has been cooperative learning. If the philosophy of the jurisdiction is to help students become independent learners, then the focus of teacher evaluation should not be student achievement on tests of basic skills. Jurisdictions that espouse shared leadership and shared decision making should ensure that teachers are actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of teacher evaluation practices. If teachers are encouraged to individualize instruction to meet the different needs of students, then it would be inconsistent and undermining to subject all teachers to the same evaluation instrument and process.

In sum, the cohesiveness and interdependence between teacher evaluation and other district practices are essential to its success; otherwise it will be treated as a hoop to be got through and a distraction from one's "real" work. Consequently, the literature suggests that:

- the district examine the compatibility, cohesiveness, and interdependence of its norms, practices, policies, and mission, particularly with respect to teacher evaluation.
- states/provinces not impose highly prescriptive teacher evaluation requirements that may create a disjuncture between teacher evaluation and other district practices.

Commitment

One point that has been made repeatedly throughout this chapter is that the evaluation context—in particular, "top-level commitment to and resources for evaluation" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 104)—have a greater impact on the success of teacher evaluation than do the specific instruments or procedures. In fact, *on paper* successful teacher evaluation policies and procedures often do not appear very different from unsuccessful ones.

The commitment of senior administrators—their seriousness of purpose—can be demonstrated in many ways; for example:

- by providing the time and opportunity for teachers and school administrators to learn how to participate meaningfully in teacher evaluation, whether it be as an evaluator, peer coach, partner in dialogical conversations, etc;
- by protecting the time needed for teachers and school administrators to engage fully in the evaluation process;

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- by recognizing and rewarding the efforts teachers and school administrators put into the evaluation process;
- by acting on issues raised during the teacher evaluation process, for example, the need to reexamine a particular policy or to develop a workshop on a particular topic;
- by taking the time to discuss and examine the assumptions underlying teacher evaluation practices with teachers and school administrators;
- by creating a central office position or committee to oversee evaluation;
- by developing a formal mechanism for monitoring and periodically revising the evaluation process.

Principals demonstrate their commitment in parallel ways at the school level.

To conclude, the literature suggests that:

- *the district create time for evaluation and give it a high priority.* Teachers and school administrators have many competing demands on their time and will respond to those they deem most important.
- *the district regularly assess the quality of evaluation and the ability of participants to contribute fully to the evaluation process.* In the case of teacher evaluation systems based on the teaching as technical expertise conceptualization, this may take the form of evaluating principals (and other evaluators) on the basis of how well they evaluate and provide feedback to teachers on established criteria. When teacher evaluation is based on teaching as art or teaching as professional judgment, then participants need feedback on, for example, their ability to encourage and support critical reflection and to engage in dialogical conversations.
- *the district prepare participants for their involvement in the teacher evaluation process.* It is important that participants share an understanding of the nature, purpose, and underlying assumptions of the process and of the criteria on which judgments are made. The content of evaluator preparation and, indeed, the choice of evaluators must suit the major purposes of evaluation and the conceptualization of teaching on which it is based.

Congruence

The need for congruence between the process of teacher evaluation and both the conceptualization of teaching on which it is based and the purpose(s) for which it is intended is widely supported.

The congruence between the process of teacher evaluation and the conceptualization of teaching on which it is based is addressed in previous sections. For example, if teaching is viewed as technical expertise, then the teacher evaluation process involves rating the teacher on a set of established criteria associated with teaching effectiveness. Self-assessment and critical reflection are at the heart of evaluation processes consistent with the teaching as art conceptualization. Teacher evaluation processes based on teaching as professional judgment provide for the development of shared standards of professional knowledge and practice situated in the context.

Although there is agreement in the literature on the need for congruence between the process of teacher evaluation and the purpose for which it is intended, there is disagreement on whether both improvement and accountability purposes can be served by a single evaluation system. "Most of the literature questions whether a single evaluation system can handle both formative (improvement-oriented) and summative (decision-oriented) evaluation. It suggests that decision-oriented evaluation would intimidate rather than help teachers and that improvement-oriented evaluation produces data unsuited to personnel decisions" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 106). McLaughlin and Pfiefer (1988), however, based on their study of a teacher evaluation system embedded in the teaching as professional judgment metaphor, argued strenuously that the dual purposes of accountability and improvement can and should be addressed simultaneously. It may be that this is possible only through the professional judgment conceptualization.

To conclude, the literature suggests that:

- *the district examine the conceptualization of teaching on which its teacher evaluation process is based, the purposes for which teacher evaluation is undertaken, and the congruence between these and the teacher evaluation process.*

Competence

Wise et al. (1985) have used the term *competence* to describe the ability to understand the needs and expectations of educators and the community with respect to teacher evaluation and to allocate resources accordingly in an efficient and effective manner.

The success of teacher evaluation depends on the support of the professionals in the jurisdiction and of the community. Such support is likely to be forthcoming only as long as teacher evaluation is judged to be a useful activity, an activity for which the benefits outweigh the costs. The literature is replete with evidence of teacher evaluation being carried out in a perfunctory way, with superficial compliance but no meaningful engagement. Such lack of support is attributed most frequently to failure of teacher evaluation to meet the needs of participants, and this most often is tied in with how resources are allocated. For example, the design of the teacher evaluation system and allocation of resources to it would be influenced by such factors as the experience of the teaching force; the stability of the teaching force; the quality of the teaching force, generally or in specific areas or amongst specific groups; changes in the jurisdiction's mission; changes in the jurisdiction's policies pertaining to instruction and programs.

To conclude, the literature suggests that:

- *the district allocate resources for teacher evaluation purposefully and equitably (rather than equally) and analyze the consequences of this resource allocation.* Otherwise:

> The failure to concentrate resources will result in unfocused evaluation that consumes resources but produces information that serves neither teachers nor administrators.... The failure to achieve accuracy and fairness will destroy the effectiveness of the teacher evaluation system. When costs are perceived to outweigh benefits, the process fails. (Wise et al., 1985, p. 110)

Collaboration

Teacher involvement in and responsibility for teacher evaluation appear to be critical to its success. There are many different ways in which teachers can participate in the process; for example, as peer evaluators; as master teachers or experts in specific areas; as mentors; as partners in dialogical conversations; as peer coaches. The teachers' association can be involved in developing and overseeing teacher evaluation and of other teaching policies seen to increase the effectiveness of an evaluation process (see especially Shedd, 1990). Ensuring that self-assessment constitutes a significant component of the teacher evaluation process has been found to be an effective way of encouraging teacher involvement and support.

To conclude, the literature suggests that:

- *the district provide a variety of opportunities for meaningful teacher involvement in the teacher evaluation process.*

Toward Teaching as Professional Judgment

Wise et al. (1985, p. 113) concluded that "the bureaucratic approach has heavy costs; the time has come to try the professional approach to evaluation." Many others support this shift (e.g., Boyer, 1990; Bridges, 1990; Conley, 1990; Gideonse, 1990; Johnson, 1990; Johnston, 1989; Koretz, 1990; Metz, 1990; Shanker, 1990; Sykes, 1990a, 1990b), for a number of reasons. Basing teacher evaluation on the teaching as professional judgment conceptualization is seen to be more in keeping with how teachers understand their role and with how they improve their practice; to involve teachers more meaningfully; to be more sensitive to contextual differences and to student and parent concerns; to make improvement or growth central without ignoring the issue of incompetence; and to facilitate the integration of teacher evaluation with other district practices.

To conclude, the literature suggests that

- *the district create opportunities for teachers and administrators to develop standards of practice to which they agree to be held accountable.*

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Chapter 3

Teacher Evaluation Policy Impact: Policy Analysis

Policy Analysis: Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Analysis is to describe how school jurisdictions across the province interpret and formally define in policy their responsibility for teacher evaluation.

In order to achieve this task, the following aspects of local policies were examined:

1. The declared purpose of the policy
2. Specification of the evaluation
3. Who is authorized to evaluate
4. Frequency of evaluations
5. The appeal process

Methodology

Data Collection

The team analyzing the evaluation policies comprised three researchers (one academic staff and two doctoral students). Policies were obtained by writing directly to each school jurisdiction and requesting the most recent teacher evaluation policy available. Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) were also contacted for the policies that school jurisdictions filed with them. The ROEs were considered as a secondary source should the return rate from school jurisdictions be problematic during the summer vacation months. The ROEs indicated that generally school jurisdictions did not send in any policies that might have been updated since 1984. Copies of such policies as were on file were forwarded from all ROEs.

The school jurisdictions generally responded cooperatively. Policies were sent to the researchers throughout the summer. A follow-up letter was sent to nonrespondents in September.

One hundred and thirty-three policies have been received from K-12 public and separate systems, colleges, and private schools. The return rate from the four major school jurisdiction types was:

Counties	28/30	93%
Public Districts	25/29	86%
School Divisions	27/31	87%
RC Districts	35/45	78%

No response was received from a number of small RC districts, and three small RC districts indicated that no policy was in place. All policies included some type of guidelines, with formats ranging from half a page to a professionally printed booklet.

Framework for Analysis

The framework for analysis was developed on the basis of the following factors:

1. A review of the literature, particularly focusing on studies conducted in Alberta (Reikie & Holdaway, 1978; Duncan, 1984; Townsend, 1984; and Burger, 1988) in order to establish background and context specific to teacher evaluation in Alberta; in addition, the comprehensive analysis of teacher evaluation practices by Wise et al. (1985) was studied, with particular attention to the discussion of four perspectives for teacher evaluation.
2. A scanning of the policies received by the researchers, in order to gain familiarity with the range of formats and philosophical orientations.

On the basis of this information, each of the three members of the research team separately developed a draft of the framework for analysis. Subsequently, a set of five policies was distributed to each researcher, and in consultation, while using these sample policies as tools, the first common draft of the framework was synthesized from the three individual drafts. Considerable discussion followed regarding shared meanings, to ensure that all researchers would be consistent in the application of the agreed on criteria. The major concern at this point was to ensure that the framework be comprehensive enough to cover all possible aspects of local policies, and to facilitate interrater reliability. See Table 1 for categories and items of the final draft of the framework.

The entire framework for analysis was fitted on a 8½x14in. page, thus allowing for one page per policy. The framework was applied by checking off all applicable categories which appeared in a policy and cross-indexing them to the relevant policy sections.

Establishing Interrater Reliability

This common framework was then applied by each research team member to a sample of five policies. The researchers then compared the results of their analysis and discussed any discrepancies in assigned meanings, until a complete agreement resulted regarding all criteria. Some adjustments to the first draft were also made as a result of these discussions.

This second draft of the common framework was then used individually by each researcher on another sample of policies and again subsequently discussed in a group to ensure maximum consistently. After minor revisions this draft was to be used as the final draft and each researcher used it individually on a number of policies. It soon became clear, however, that more adjustments had to be done on sections V Evaluation Characteristics, and VI Evaluation Schedule, of the framework. This adjustment occurred after another group meeting and discussion. This revised third and final draft was to be used on all the policies that were collected by the researchers (Table 1).

After analyzing a number of policies, the research team found yet another problem with the framework. This was regarding section IV, Teacher Role Expectations, which was adapted from Wise et al. (1985) and dealt with the image of teachers conveyed by the policy. It became clear that this information could not be obtained from the policy documents and that a more appropriate source for this information would be interviews and observations. Thereafter, it was agreed by all three researchers to leave out this section in applying the third draft of the framework.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data computation was performed by University of Calgary Academic Computing Services. Comparisons of policies were made on the basis of jurisdiction type and presence or absence of framework items, which were then expressed in percentages. There was no possibility of rank-ordering the items contained in the policies according to degree of importance or any other criterion. Although components such as purpose often did contain more than one item, these were usually subsumed in the same paragraph, with no indication of rank order. Even where items did appear in a list form, their order could not be interpreted as implying any type of ranking. Thus, because of the formats of the policies, and hence the questions contained in the framework, frequency comparisons were the most appropriate statistical techniques to use. The questions were not discriminating enough to enable the use of such techniques as t-tests, for example. For this reason, rather than using measures of statistical significance, a frequency of 50% was used as a benchmark of *practical significance.*

Year of Policy Issue

Because a number of policies did not have date of approval specified, this dimension was not initially considered for analysis. It may, however, add some interesting background information.

1978-1984	12.8%
1985	21.8%
1986-1991	48.9%
Date unspecified	16.5%

See Table 2.

Overall, the highest proportion (70.7%) of policies comes from 1985 or later, suggesting that most school jurisdictions either initiated or reviewed their policies in accordance with the 1985 provincial mandate. *Within* the jurisdiction types, the school divisions have the highest percentage of policies dated 1985 or later (88.9%). Colleges and government institutions rank second (83.3%). The remaining school jurisdictions range between 60 and 68.6%. It appears that colleges and government institutions established their teacher evaluation policies in response to the 1985 mandate. Of the 1985-1990 policies, the largest group comes from 1985 in public districts, divisions and, RC districts, followed by two smaller groups from 1990 and 1991 for school divisions and RC districts, perhaps suggesting five-year policy review cycles.

The frequency pattern of new policies in the counties is different from the other three jurisdiction types. There seems to be no significant increase in new policies until 1988 (14.3%) and 1990 (32.1%).

The jurisdictions with the highest percentage of pre-1985 policies are the counties (25%) and public districts (24%).

The Declared Purpose of the Policy

Purposes defined most frequently (50% or more):

Improvement of instruction	88.5%
Continuing contract decisions	77.7%
Permanent certification decisions	73.1%
Dismissal process component	63.1%
Promotion criterion	58.5%
Affirmation and support	54.6%
Professional development component	52.3%
Fair personnel decision making	50.8%

See Table 3.

It is interesting to note that while the most frequently cited purpose was improvement of instruction (88.5%) other items related to this issue appear with much lower frequency (affirmation and support: 54.6%, definition of Professional development component: 52.3%, Impact on students: 44.6%).

On the other hand, the remaining high-frequency items all deal with the legal accountability aspect of teacher evaluations whereby school boards make a judgment on a teacher's attainment of technical expertise.

Counties

Purposes defined most frequently (50% or more):

Improvement of instruction	92.9%
Permanent certification	92.9%
Continuing contract	82.1%
Professional development	60.7%
Dismissal process	60.7%
Promotion criteria	57.1%
Transfer policies	57.1%
Affirmation and support	53.6%
Impact on students	53.6%
Definition of summative purposes	50.0%

Table 1

SCHOOL DISTRICT: ______________________

DATE: ______________________

I. UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY

II PURPOSES AND INTENTS

(a) Improvement of instruction ______
(b) Impact on students ______
(c) Fair personnel decision-making ______
(d) Continuous contract decisions ______
(e) Permanent certification criteria ______
(f) Professional development ______
(g) Affirmation & support of teacher ______
(h) Definition of formative purposes ______
(i) Definition of summative purposes ______
(j) Promotion criteria ______
(k) Demotion criteria ______
(l) Dismissal process ______
(m) Retention criteria ______
(n) Transfer policies ______
(o) Assessment of inservice needs ______
(p) Communicate Board's expectation for teacher performance ______

III GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

(a) Disposition of reports specified ______
(b) Access to reports specified ______
(c) Evaluation criteria specified ______
(d) Self evaluation encouraged ______
(e) Peer evaluation encouraged ______
(f) Preconference suggested ______
(g) Preconference required ______
(h) Postconference suggested ______
(i) Postconference required ______
(j) Remedial process specified ______
(k) Evaluation instruments specified ______
(l) Evaluation time specified ______
(m) Unannounced visits permitted ______
(n) Unannounced visits prohibited ______
(o) Policy review specified ______
(p) Evaluation inservice specified ______
(q) Guidelines/procedures not specified ______

IV TEACHER ROLE EXPECTATIONS

(a) Not specified ______
(b) Teacher as technician ______
(c) Teacher as professional ______
(d) Teacher as artist ______

V EVALUATOR CHARACTERISTICS

(a) Evaluator not specified ______
(b) Evaluator specified:
    Superintendent ______
    Assistant Superintendent ______
    Central office personnel ______
    Principal ______
    Vice/Assistant Principal ______
    Other ______
(c) Evaluator training specified ______

VI EVALUATION SCHEDULE

(a) Evaluation schedule not specified ______
(b) Regular evaluation of all staff ______
(c) Substitute contract ______
(d) Temporary contract:
    Annually ______
    Semi-annually ______
    Three times/year ______
    More than three times/year ______
    Other ______
    Not specified ______
(e) Interim contract:
    Annually ______
    Semi-annually ______
    Three times/year ______
    More than three times/year ______
    Other ______
    Not specified ______
(f) Probationary contract/New teacher
    Annually ______
    Semi-annually ______
    Three times/year ______
    More than three times/year ______
    Other ______
    Not specified ______
(g) Continuing contract
    Annually ______
    Every two years ______
    Every three years ______
    More than every three years ______
    Other ______
    Not specified ______
(h) Eligible for permanent certification
    Annually ______
    Semi-annually ______
    Three times/year ______
    More than three times/year ______
    Other ______
    Not Specified ______

VII APPEAL PROCEDURES

(a) No appeal process specified ______
(b) Appeal levels specified ______
First - superintendent ______
    - assistant superintendent ______
    - school board/superintendent ______
    - other ______
Second - superintendent ______
    - school board ______
    - other ______
Third - school board ______
    - other ______
(c) Appeal timelines specified ______
(d) Appeal bases specified ______
(e) Provincial/federal appeal options identified ______

Table 2 - Provincial: Year of Policy Issue

Year of Policy Issue	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC Districts	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Provincial Total
0 Unspecified	3 10.7%	4 16.0%	1 3.7%	9 25.7%	4 36.4%	1 16.7%		22 16.5%
78	1 3.6%	1 4.0%						2 1.5%
81	2 7.1%							2 1.5%
82				1 2.9				1 0.8%
83	2 7.1%	2 8.0%	1 3.7%					5 3.8%
84	2 7.1%	3 12.0%	1 3.7%	1 2.9%				7 5.3%
85	2 7.1%	6 24.0%	8 29.6%	13 37.1%				29 21.8%
86	1 3.6%		2 7.4%	2 5.7%	2 18.2%	2 33.3%		9 6.8%
87	1 3.6%	3 12.0%	2 7.4%	1 2.9%		1 16.7%		8 6.0%
88	4 14.3%	3 12.0%	1 3.7%	1 2.9%	2 18.2%	1 16.7%		12 9.0%
89	1 3.6%	3 12.0%	2 7.4%	2 5.7%	1 9.1%			9 6.8%
90	9 32.1%		6 22.2%	2 5.7%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	1 100%	20 15.0%
91			3 11.1%	3 8.6%	1 9.1%			7 5.3%
Column Total	28 21.1%	25 18.8%	27 20.3%	35 25.3%	11 8.3%	6 4.5%	1 0.8%	133 100.0%

Note:

St. Albert Protestant Separate District No. 6 is included in the "Public District" category

St. Albert Public School District No. 3 is included in the "RC Districts" category

Table 3 - Provincial: Purposes

Purposes	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC District	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Prov. Total
Q2I1 Improvement of Instruction	26 92.9%	21 87.4%	23 85.2%	32 91.4%	8 80.0%	4 80.0%	1 100.0%	115 88.5%
Q2I2 Impact on Students	15 53.6%	10 41.7%	13 48.1%	12 34.3%	3 30.0%	4 80.0%	1 100.0%	58 44.6%
Q2I3 Fair Personnel Decision-Making	12 42.9%	13 54.2%	13 48.1%	20 57.1%	5 50.0%	3 60.0%	0 0.0%	66 50.8
Q2I4 Continuous Contract	23 82.1%	20 83.3%	23 85.2%	24 68.6%	8 80.0%	2 40.0%	1 100.0%	101 77.7%
Q2I5 Permanent Certification	26 92.9%	17 70.8%	17 63.0%	31 88.6%	1 10.0%	2 40.0%	1 100.0%	95 73.1%
Q2I6 Professional Development	17 60.7%	13 54.2%	12 44.4%	16 45.7%	6 60.0%	3 60.0%	1 100.0%	68 52.3%
Q2I7 Affirmation and Support	15 53.6%	15 62.5%	10 37.0%	23 65.7%	6 60.0%	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	71 54.6%
Q2I8 Definition of Formative	10 35.7%	11 45.8%	10 37.0%	26 74.3%	2 20.0%	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	61 46.9%
Q2I9 Definition of Summative	14 50.0%	11 45.8%	10 37.0%	25 71.4%	2 20.0%	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	64 49.2%
Q2I10 Promotion Criteria	16 57.1%	10 41.7%	14 51.9%	29 82.9%	5 50.0%	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	76 58.5%
Q2I11 Demotion Criteria	1 3.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.8%
Q2I12 Dismissal Process	17 60.7%	12 50.0%	14 51.9%	28 80.0%	6 60.0%	4 80.0%	1 100.0%	82 63.1%
Q2I13 Retention Criteria	7 25.0%	1 4.2	7 25.9	4 11.4	1 10.0	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 15.4%
Q2I14 Transfer Policies	16 57.1%	8 33.3%	12 44.6%	21 60.0%	2 20.0%	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	61 46.9%
Q2I15 Assessment of Inservice	5 17.9%	5 20.8%	5 18.5%	6 17.1%	1 10.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	23 17.7%
Q2I16 Communicate Board's Expectation	11 39.3%	8 33.3%	12 44.4%	16 45.7%	3 30.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	51 39.2%
COLUMN TOTAL	28 21.5%	24 18.5%	27 20.8%	35 26.9%	10 7.7%	5 3.8%	1 0.8%	130 100.0%

Percents and Totals Based on Respondents
130 Valid Cases 3 Missing Cases

Public Districts

Purposes defined most frequently (50% or more):

Improvement of instruction	87.5%
Continuing contract	83.3%
Permanent certification	70.8%
Affirmation and support	62.5%
Fair personnel decision making	54.2%
Professional development	54.2%
Dismissal process	50.0%

Divisions

Purposes defined most frequently (50% or more):

Improvement of instruction	85.2%
Continuing contract	85.2%
Permanent certification	63.0%
Promotion criteria	51.9%
Dismissal process	51.9%

RC Districts

Purposes defined most frequently (50% or more):

Improvement of instruction	91.4%
Permanent certification	88.6%
Promotion criteria	82.9%
Dismissal process	80.0%
Definition of formative purpose	71.4%
Continuing contract	68.6%
Affirmation and support	65.7%
Transfer policies	60.0%
Fair personnel decisions	57.1%

Overall, there is considerable similarity between the purposes as declared in the policies of the four jurisdiction types. However, some small differences might be noteworthy.

The similarities include the fact that all four jurisdiction types declare improvement of instruction most frequently as purpose of evaluation. The majority of the remaining high frequency items in all four groups focus on the legal aspects of evaluation. Permanent certification and continuing contract have second or third highest frequencies in all four groups.

The frequencies and types of items in county policies are similar to those of RC districts, while public districts and divisions bear some similarities to each other.

Both county and RC district policies have a larger number of items with frequencies over 50%, and the percentages are slightly higher than for the other two groups. This might suggest that the policies in counties and in RC districts are somewhat more uniform than those within the other two types. A fairly high percentage of counties (60.7%) list professional development as a purpose, while 71.4% of RC districts indicate definition of formative purpose, perhaps showing more support for the improvement of instruction focus.

RC districts are also distinguished by giving high importance to promotion and dismissal criteria.

The list of high-frequency items in public district and division policies is shorter, perhaps indicating less uniformity within each group's policies.

Specification of the Evaluation Process

Guidelines specified most frequently (50% or more):

Disposition of reports	94.0%
Evaluation criteria	82.0%
Access to reports	69.2%
Evaluation time specified	67.7%
Post-conference required	60.9%
Remedial process specified	55.6%

See Table 4.

Again, the stress here tends to be on the legal aspects of the process, rather than on the means of facilitating improvement of instruction. For example, although 60.9% of policies require a postconference, only 29.3% require a preconference, 15.0% suggest a preconference, and 25.6% encourage peer evaluation. The latter three items tend to be associated with formative types of evaluation processes that aim at instructional improvement.

Counties

Guidelines specified most frequently (50% or more):

Disposition of reports	96.4%
Evaluation criteria	82.1%
Access to reports specified	75.0%
Evaluation time specified	64.3%
Postconference required	60.7%
Policy review specified	60.7%
Remedial process specified	57.1%

Public Districts

Guidelines specified most frequently (50% or more):

Disposition of reports	96.0%
Evaluation criteria	84.0%
Evaluation time specified	68.0%
Access to reports specified	60.0%
Self-evaluation encouraged	56.0%

Divisions

Guidelines specified most frequently (50% or more):

Disposition of reports	92.6
Evaluation time specified	81.5%
Access to report specified	74.1%
Evaluation criteria specified	70.4%
Remedial process specified	55.6%
Post-conference required	51.9%

The divisional policies tended to be quite comprehensive in terms of describing the process, the report, and the follow-up.

Table 4 - Provincial: Evaluation Process

Guidelines	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC District	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Prov. Total
Q2I1 Disposition of Reports Specified	27 96.4%	24 96.0%	25 92.6%	34 97.1%	10 90.9%	4 66.7%	1 100.0%	125 94.0%
Q2I2 Access to Reports Specified	21 75.0%	15 60.0%	20 74.1%	26 74.3%	7 63.6%	2 33.3%	1 100.0%	92 69.2%
Q2I3 Evaluation Criteria Specified	23 82.1%	21 84.0%	19 70.4%	29 82.9%	10 90.9%	6 100.0%	1 100.0%	109 82.0
Q2I4 Self Evaluation Encouraged	10 35.7%	14 56.0%	9 33.3%	21 60.0%	4 36.6%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	61 45.9%
Q2I5 Peer Evaluation Encouraged	6 21.4%	7 28.0%	4 14.8%	10 28.6%	4 36.6%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	34 25.6%
Q2I6 Preconference Suggested	3 10.7%	5 20.0%	3 11.1%	9 25.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 15.0%
Q2I7 Preconference Required	8 28.6%	6 24.0%	10 37.0%	9 25.7%	4 36.4%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	39 29.3%
Q2I8 Postconference Suggested	4 14.3%	5 20.0%	3 11.1%	1 2.9%	1 9.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	14 10.5%
Q2I9 Postconference Required	17 60.7%	12 8.0%	14 51.9%	23 65.7%	8 72.7%	6 100.0%	1 100.0%	81 60.9%
Q2I10 Remedial Process Specified	16 57.1%	12 8.0%	15 55.6%	22 62.9%	5 45.5%	4 66.7%	0 0.0%	74 55.6%
Q2I12 Evaluation Time Specified	18 64.3%	17 68.0%	22 81.5%	25 71.4%	5 45.5%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	90 67.7%
Q2I13 Unannounced Visits permitted	7 25.0%	6 24.0%	4 14.8%	8 22.9%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	27 20.3%
Q2I14 Unannounced Visits Prohibited	0 0.0%	0 0.0	0 0.0	4 11.4	0 0.0	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	6 4.5%
Q2I15 Policy Review Specified	17 60.7%	9 36.0%	12 44.4%	11 31.4%	4 36.4%	1 16.7%	1 100.0%	55 41.4%
Q2I16 Evaluation Inservice Specified	9 32.1%	9 36.0%	9 33.3%	9 25.7%	5 45.5%	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	44 33.1%
COLUMN TOTAL	28 21.1%	25 18.8%	27 20.3%	35 26.3%	11 8.3%	6 4.5%	1 0.8%	133 100.0%

Percents and Totals Based on Respondents
133 Valid Cases 0 Missing Cases

RC Districts

Guidelines specified most frequently (50% or more):

Disposition of reports	97.1%
Evaluation criteria	82.9%
Access to reports specified	74.3%
Evaluation time specified	71.4%
Post-conference required	65.7%
Remedial process specified	62.9%
Self-evaluation encouraged	60.0%

There is considerable similarity among all four groups both in terms of the high-frequency items and in terms of frequency percentages. The most frequently appearing items include disposition of reports, specification of evaluation criteria, access to reports, and specification of evaluation time. These items would ensure that aspects of evaluation most amenable to dispute would be well defined, thus reducing the risk of legal liability.

Who is Authorized to Evaluate

Characteristics specified most frequently (50% or more):

Principal alone	88.5%
Superintendent alone	60.3%

Evaluator training was discussed in 15.3% of the policies.

Only 1.5% of policies did not specify who was authorized to evaluate teachers.

School-based personnel combined (Principal and vice/assistant principal)	68%
Central Office personnel combined (Superintendent, assistant Sup., C.O. personnel)	38%

See Table 5.

School-based administration is most frequently responsible for teacher evaluation. This appears to reflect not only the School Act Section 15, but probably also the realities of limited resources (time and personnel) and the view that the evaluator should be familiar with the context within which teachers are evaluated.

It is interesting to note that only 15.3% of the policies address the issue of evaluator training, considering its potential impact on both formative and summative types of evaluations.

The fact that such a low percentage of policies did not specify who could evaluate teachers again supports the view that the policies were formulated with careful attention to legal parameters.

Counties

Characteristics specified most frequently (50% or more):

Principal	92.9%
Superintendent	67.9%
Assistant superintendent	50.0%
Vice/assistant principal	50.0%

There was no single county policy that did not specify an evaluator.

Public Districts

Characteristics specified most frequently (50% or more):

Principal	92.0%
Superintendent	64.0%

Evaluator training was discussed in 28.0% of the policies.

Divisions

Characteristics specified most frequently (50% or more):

Principal	92.6%
Superintendent	66.7%
Vice/assistant principal	59.3%
RC Districts	

Characteristics specified most frequently (50% or more):

RC Districts

Principal	93.9%
Superintendent	72.7%
Vice/Assistant Principal	54.5%

The evaluator was specified in all policies. All four groups identified the principal as evaluator in over 90% of the policies. The superintendent was identified in over two thirds of the policies in all four groups. This could be interpreted as the principal being the primary evaluator and evaluating more often than the superintendent. This probably again reflects the realities of school board operations.

Frequency of Evaluations

Evaluation schedules were diverse, and in no case did 50% or more policies contain the same specifications. The 10 most frequently occurring items were therefore selected to provide an overview of evaluation schedules currently in use:

Regular evaluation of all staff	36.8%
Continuing—every 3 years	42.1%
Continuing—more than every 3 years	28.6%
Temporary contract—schedule unspecified	34.6%
Interim contract—schedule unspecified	33.1%
Eligible for Permanent certification—Annually	29.3%
Eligible for permanent certification—semiannually	17.3%
Eligible for Permanent Certification—not specified	21.1%
Probationary/new—semiannually	28.6%
Probationary/new—3 times per year	24.8%
Probationary/new—annually	18.8%

6.8% of policies did not specify any evaluation schedule or timeline.

See Table 6.

Teachers on continuing contracts are evaluated at least every three years.

Those eligible for permanent certification are evaluated in approximately the ratio of 2:1, annually vs. semiannually, although a large percentage (21.1%) of policies do not specify frequency of evaluation. Most teachers on probationary contract tend to be evaluated two to

Table 5 - Provincial: Evaluator Characteristics

Evaluator Characteristics	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC District	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Prov. Total
Q5A Evaluator Not Specified	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	2 1.5%
Q5B1 Superintendent	19 67.9%	16 64.0%	18 66.7%	24 72.7%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	1 100.0%	79 60.3%
Q5B2 Assistant Superintendent	14 50.0%	7 28.0%	10 37.0%	11 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	43 32.8
Q5B3 Central Office Personnel	12 42.9%	6 24.0%	6 22.2%	2 6.1%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	27 20.6%
Q5B4 Principal	26 92.9%	23 92.0%	25 92.6%	31 93.9%	8 72.7%	2 33.3%	1 100.0%	116 88.5%
Q5B5 Vice/Assistant Principal	14 50.0%	10 40.0%	16 59.3%	18 54.5%	2 18.2%	1 16.7%	1 100.0%	62 47.3%
Q5B6 Other	7 25.0%	5 20.0%	11 40.7%	4 12.1%	5 45.5%	5 83.3%	0 0.0%	37 28.2%
Q5C Evaluator Training Specified	4 14.3%	7 28.0%	4 14.8%	1 3.0%	2 18.2%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	20 15.3%
COLUMN TOTAL	28 21.4%	25 19.1%	27 20.6%	33 25.2%	11 8.4%	6 4.6%	1 0.8%	131 100.0%

Percents and Totals Based on Respondents
131 Valid Cases 2 Missing Cases

Table 6 - Provincial: Evaluation Schedule

Evaluation Schedule	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC District	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Prov. Total
Q6A Evaluation Schedule	0 0.0%	3 12.0%	2 7.6%	2 5.7%	2 18.2%	0 0.0%	0.0%	9 6.8%
Q6B Regular Evaluation - All	8 28.6%	10 40.0%	8 29.6%	15 42.9%	6 54.5%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	49 36.8%
Q6C Substitute Contract	7 25.0%	4 16.0%	2 7.4%	6 17.1%	3 27.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	22 16.5%
Q6D1 Temporary: Annually	6 21.4%	3 12.0%	5 18.5%	5 14.3%	1 9.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 15.0%
Q6D2 Semi-Annually	2 7.1%	2 8.0%	3 11.1%	2 5.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	9 6.8%
Q6D3 Three Times/Year	2 7.1%	1 4.0%	4 14.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 5.3%
Q6D5 Other	2 7.1%	4 16.0%	2 7.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	1 100.0%	10 7.5%
Q6D6 Not Specified	7 25.0%	9 36.0%	3 11.1%	21 60.0%	5 45.5%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	46 34.6%
Q6E1 Interim: Annually	4 14.3%	3 12.0%	1 3.7%	6 17.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16 10.5%
Q6E2 Semi-Annually	3 10.7%	2 8.0%	3 11.1%	8 22.9%	1 9.1%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	18 13.5%
Q6E3 Three Times/Year	1 3.6%	2 8.0%	1 3.7%	2 5.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 4.5%
Q6E4 More Than Three Times	2 7.1%	0 0.0%	1 3.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 2.3%
Q6E5 Other	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 3.7%	0 0.0%	0% 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%
Q6E6 Not Specified	6 21.4%	9 36.0%	13 48.1%	11 48.1%	4 36.6%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	44 33.1%
Q6F1 Prob/New: Annually	2 7.1%	6 24.0%	4 14.8%	8 22.9%	3 27.3%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	25 18.8%
Q6F2 Semi-Annually	12 42.9%	6 24.0%	8 29.6%	9 25.7%	3 27.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	38 28.6%
Q6F2 Three Times/Year	5 17.9%	7 28.0%	11 40.7%	10 28.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	33 24.8%
Q6F4 More Than Three Times	8 28.6%	2 8.0%	4 14.8%	7 20.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	21 15.8%
Q6F5 Other	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 8.6%	0 0.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	4 3.0%

Q6F6 Not Specified	1 3.6%	3 12.0%	5 18.5%	3 8.6%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	14 10.5%
G6G1 Con/Ten: Annually	3 10.7%	2 8.0%	4 14.8%	4 11.4%	1 9.1%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	16 12.0%
G6G2 Every Two Years	1 3.6%	2 8.0%	2 7.6%	2 5.7%	1 9.0%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	9 6.8%
G6G3 Every Three Years	15 53.6%	10 40.0%	12 44.4%	15 42.9%	4 36.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	56 42.1%
G6G4 More Than Every Three Yrs	10 35.7%	5 20.0%	9 33.3%	13 37.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	38 28.6%
G6G5 Other	3 10.7%	2 8.0%	4 14.8%	2 5.7%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	13 9.8%
G6G6 Not Specified	0 0.0%	1 4.0%	2 7.4%	1 2.9%	1 9.1%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	6 4.5%
G6H1 Perm Cert: Annually	13 46.4%	5 20.0%	10 37.0%	8 22.9%	2 18.2%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	39 29.3%
G6H2 Semi-Annually	6 21.6%	3 12.0%	6 22.2%	8 22.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	23 17.3%
G6H3 Three Times/Year	1 3.6%	4 16.0%	1 3.7%	4 11.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 7.5%
G6H4 Other	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.5%
G6H5 Not Specified	1 3.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 5.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 2.3%
G6H6	2 7.1%	5 20.0%	7 25.9%	10 28.6%	3 27.3%	1 16.7%	0 0.0%	23 21.1%
COLUMN TOTAL	28 21.1%	25 18.8%	27 20.3%	35 26.3%	11 8.3%	6 4.5%	1 0.8%	133 100.0%

Percents and Totals Based on Respondents
133 Valid Cases 0 Missing Cases

three times per year, and less frequently (18.8%) once per year.

Again, only a small percentage (6.8%) of policies did not specify evaluation timelines, which supports the legalistic focus of the policies.

Counties

Again, the evaluation schedules varied greatly. Those that appeared significantly more frequently include:

Continuing—every 3 years	53.6%
Eligible for permanent certificate—annually	46.4%
Probationary/new teachers—semiannually	42.9%
Continuing—more than every 3 years	35.7%
Regular evaluation of all staff	28.6%
Probationary/new—more than 3 times per year	28.6%
Substitute teachers evaluated	25.0%
Temporary contr. evaluated, schedule unspecified	25.0%

All policies specified some type of evaluation schedule.

Public Districts

Frequently noted evaluation schedules:

Regular evaluation of all staff	40.0%
Continuing—every 3 years	40.0%
Temporary contract—evaluated but no schedule	36.0%
Interim—evaluated but no schedule	36.0%
Probationary/new—3 times per year	28.0%
Probationary/new—2 times per year	24.0%
Probationary/new—1 time per year	24.0%

Divisions

Frequently specified schedules include:

Interim evaluations done, time unspecified	48.1%
Continuing—every 3 years	44.4%
Probationary/new—3 times per year	40.7%
Eligible for permanent certification—annually	37.0%
Continuing—more than every 3 years	33.3%
Probationary/new—2 times per year	29.6%
Regular evaluation of all staff	29.6%
Eligible for permanent certification—time unspecified	25.9%

RC Districts

Frequently specified schedules included:

Temporary contract—evaluated but time unspecified	60.0%
Regular evaluation of all staff	42.9%
Continuing—every 3 years	42.9%
Continuing—more than every 3 years	37.1%
Interim contract—evaluated, time unspecified	31.4%
Probationary/new—3 times per year	28.6%
Eligible for permanent certification—evaluated, time unspecified	28.6%

In all four groups, teachers on probationary contract receive the most attention (three times per year or more), those eligible for permanent certification generally receive one visit during the year, and staff with continuing contracts are evaluated once every three years.

This schedule reflects the focus on legal and employment accountability, but clearly would not serve as a proper vehicle for improvement of instruction. The assumption here is that once teachers receive permanent certification their need for feedback decreases.

The Appeal Process

Appeal procedures most frequently defined (50% or more):

Appeal timelines specified	70.6%
First level of appeal—superintendent	58.7%

Only 3.2% of policies mentioned no type of appeal process.

See Table 7.

Overall, the frequencies of appeal designates in descending order are:

First	superintendent	58.7%
Second	school board	29.4%
First	evaluator	23.8%

The evaluator would probably be the principal, according to previous data, because the principal is designated most frequently as the evaluator. The superintendent and the board are most likely to receive appeals, however, which suggests again that the boards endeavor to ensure that the appeals are handled uniformly and that the process is under the board's control.

The 3.2% of policies without an appeal process do not come from the four main jurisdiction types.

Counties

Appeal components most frequently specified (50% or more):

Superintendent as first level appeal	76.9%
Appeal timelines specified	73.1%

Public Districts

Appeal components most frequently specified (50% or more):

Appeal timelines specified	69.6%
Superintendent first level appeal	60.9%

Divisions

Most frequently specified appeal components (50% or more):

Appeal timelines specified	66.7%
Superintendent - first level appeal	63.0%

RC Districts

Most frequently specified appeal components (50% or more):

Appeal timelines specified	85.3%
Superintendent - first level appeal	64.7%
Appeal bases specified	58.8%

All policies specified an appeal process. The superintendent is the most frequently identified first level of appeal in all four groups. Timelines for appeal are

Table 7 - Provincial: The Appeal Process

Appeal Process	Counties	Public District	School Division	RC District	Private Schools	Colleges and Gov't Institutions	Band Schools	Prov. Total
Q7A No Appeal Process Specified	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 20.0%	2 40.0%	0 0.0%	4 3.2%
Q7B1 First Superintendent	20 76.4%	14 60.9%	17 63.0%	22 64.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	74 58.7%
Q7B2 First Evaluator	8 30.8%	7 30.4%	4 14.8%	5 14.7%	5 50.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	30 23.8
Q7B3 First Assistant Superintendent	2 7.7%	2 8.7%	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 4.0%
Q7B4 First School Board/Superintendent	2 7.7%	3 13.0%	3 11.1%	7 20.6%	2 20.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 13.5%
Q7B5 First Other	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 11.1%	1 2.9%	2 20.0%	2 40.0%	0 0.0%	8 6.3%
Q7B6 Second Superintendent	5 19.2%	5 21.7%	5 18.5%	5 14.7%	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	21 16.7%
Q7B7 Second School Board	8 30.8%	7 30.4%	10 37.0%	10 29.4%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 100.0%	37 29.4%
Q7B8 Second Other	2 7.7%	1 4.3%	1 3.7%	1 2.9%	1 10.0%	3 60.0%	0 0.0%	9 7.1%
Q7B9 Third School Board	4 15.4%	3 13.0%	4 14.8%	3 8.8%	1 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	15 11.9%
Q7B10 Third Other	2 7.7%	1 4.3%	0 0.0%	1 2.9%	1 10.0%	1 20.0%	0 0.0%	6 4.8%
Q7C Appeal Timelines Specified	19 73.1%	16 69.6%	18 66.7%	29 85.3%	4 40.0%	2 40.0%	1 100.0%	89 70.6%
Q7D Appeal Bases Specified	11 42.3%	11 47.8	9 33.3	20 58.8	1 10.0	1 20.0%	1 100.0%	54 42.9%
Q7E Provincial/Federal Appeals Options	1 3.8%	2 8.7%	2 7.4%	1 2.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 4.8%
COLUMN TOTAL	26 20.6%	23 18.3%	27 21.4%	34 27.0%	10 7.9%	5 4.0%	1 0.8%	126 100.0%

specified in at least two thirds of all policies. RC district policies specify bases for appeal more often (58.8%) than those of the other three groups.

Provincial Picture Summary

At least 70.7% of the policies have been passed by boards within the last six years. The three most frequently stated purposes for the policies include improvement of instruction, continuing contract decisions, and permanent certification decisions.

Almost all (94%) policies specify guidelines for the disposition of evaluation reports. Most policies also include evaluation criteria. Access to report and evaluation timelines are frequently mentioned as well.

The principal is identified most frequently as the evaluator, followed by the superintendent.

The evaluation for continuing contract teachers tends to be at least once every three years. Teachers eligible for permanent certification are evaluated at least once per year. New teachers and teachers on probationary contracts are evaluated at least once per year, but more frequently two to three times per year.

Policies from all four jurisdiction types specify an appeal process. Most policies (70.6%) specify timelines for appeals. The superintendent is most often indicated as the first level of appeal.

Counties

Two purposes were declared by almost all county policies (92.9%): Improvement of instruction, and Permanent certification. The third most frequent purpose (82.1%) was Continuing contract.

The guidelines most frequently specified are all related to legal accountability, with the top three being Disposition of reports, Specification of evaluation criteria, and Specification of access to the reports.

The principal is the most frequently identified evaluator, followed by the superintendent.

Teachers on continuing contract are most frequently evaluated every three years, those eligible for permanent certification are evaluated once per year, and probationary teachers are evaluated two to three times per year.

All county policies specify some type of appeal process. The superintendent is most frequently identified as first level of appeal, and timelines for appeal are specified in a significant portion of the policies (73.1%).

Public Districts

Once again, Improvement of instruction, Continuing contract, and Permanent certification were the most frequently declared purposes.

The guidelines most frequently stress accountability issues such as Disposition of reports, Evaluation criteria, and Evaluation time. It is noteworthy that 56.0% of policies also encourage self-evaluation in their guidelines.

The principal is the most frequently designated evaluator, followed by the superintendent. Twenty-eight percent of the policies also discuss evaluator training.

Staff on continuing contracts are evaluated every three years whereas probationary teachers are evaluated once to three times per year.

The components of the appeal process most frequently specified include appeal timelines, and the designation of the superintendent as first level of appeal.

Divisions

The most frequently declared purposes of teacher evaluation policies are Improvement of instruction, Continuing contract, and Permanent certification. The most frequently identified evaluators are the principal, the superintendent, and the vice or assistant principal. Continuing teachers are evaluated at least every three years, while probationary teachers are evaluated two to three times per year. Those eligible for permanent certification are evaluated once per year.

The appeal process discussed in the policies most frequently specifies appeal timelines and identifies the superintendent as the first level of appeal.

RC Districts

The most frequently declared purposes again include Improvement of instruction, followed by a number of legal-accountability purposes as in the previous school jurisdictions. Noteworthy is the high frequency with which Promotion criteria (82.9%) and Dismissal process (80.0%) appear in these policies.

The guidelines most frequently addressed include Disposition of reports, Evaluation criteria, and Access to reports. 65.7% require post-conference, and 60.0% encourage self-evaluation.

The principal, superintendent, and vice or assistant principal are the most frequently identified evaluators.

Continuing teachers are evaluated at least every three years, while probationary teachers are evaluated three times per year.

The appeal process components most frequently specified include appeal timelines, superintendent as first level of appeal, and the specification of the bases on which appeals can be made.

Conclusions

Provincial Trends

The majority of school jurisdictions appear to review their teacher evaluation policies fairly regularly, since about half the policies were approved within the last five years (1986-1991).

Although the most frequently declared purpose for the policy was Improvement of instruction (88.5%), the remaining frequently declared purposes (5 of 6) dealt mostly with legal aspects, and only one was relevant to instruction: Professional development component. Thus the interpretation of Improvement of instruction appears to be one of detecting and dealing with incompetent teachers.

This interpretation is further supported by the most frequently specified guidelines, which again focus on the legal implications of the evaluation process (e.g., disposition of reports, access to reports, specification of criteria and schedules, etc.).

Almost all (98.5%) policies specified who was authorized to evaluate. The principal was most frequently identified, followed by the superintendent. This is not surprising, since the School Act specifies teacher evaluation as one of the responsibilities of the principal.

The general trends in frequency of evaluation indicate that new teachers or teachers on probationary contract are evaluated two to three times per year. Teachers eligible for permanent certification are generally evaluated once every three years.

Almost all (96.8%) policies specify some type of appeal process. The most frequently specified aspects of the process are timelines and levels of appeal, with the superintendent being most frequently cited as first level of appeal. Only 23.8% of policies identify the evaluator as first level of appeal.

Trends in School Jurisdictions

There are no substantial differences among the policies from the four types of school jurisdictions, although some of the differences between RC districts and the other jurisdictions may be of interest.

The same top ranking policy items appear in all four groups, the only difference being in the relative order within them, from one jurisdiction type to the other.

Almost all the policies across the province declared Improvement of instruction as their main purpose. There is a consistent trend across all four groups toward delineating specifically how their legal accountability for teacher evaluation will be discharged.

Contractual and certification matters appear to be the focus of the policies in all four types of school jurisdictions.

Comparison with Earlier Study

A study (Burger, 1988) of 30 school jurisdictions conducted in 1986-1987 included an analysis of policy documents. Burger's analysis yielded similar results to the present analysis.

The declared purposes have not changed appreciably: in both cases the most frequently declared purpose was Improvement of instruction, while the majority of the remaining purposes dealt with legal aspects. The frequencies of the one item dealing with professional development were almost identical, while the percentages among the legalistic components are higher in the current data.

In terms of the evaluation process, the most frequent guidelines in both studies dealt with the disposition of reports. Other frequently specified components again dealt with legal aspects such as access to reports and evaluation criteria. One notable difference is that Burger's study included two components within the top six: self-evaluation encouraged (63.3%) and peer evaluation encouraged (46.6%), which ranked much lower in the current study: self-evaluation (45.9%) and peer evaluation (25.6%).

The evaluation schedules for continuing contract, probationary, and those eligible for permanent certification have not changed appreciably, except that in the current study those teachers specifically new to the jurisdiction or teachers on probationary contracts are evaluated more often:

	Burger	Current—where time specified
Once per year	33.3%	18.8%
Twice per year	30.0%	28.6%
3 times per year	20.0%	24.8%
3 times plus	16.6%	15.8%
	100.0%	88.0%

The frequency of annual evaluations for this group has been reduced almost by half, indicating a trend for more frequent evaluations.

The most frequently discussed component of the appeal process in both studies is the specification of appeal timelines. In Burger's study the first level of appeal is most frequently lodged with the evaluator, whereas in the current study the superintendent is most frequently identified at the first level of appeal. In Burger's study 10% of policies had no appeal process, currently only 3.2% do not.

Implications

Although the most often declared purpose for teacher evaluation in Alberta is *improvement* of instruction, a closer examination indicates that the main purpose for school jurisdictions is to discharge their legal responsibilities as they pertain to contractual matters, fair personnel decision making, and to the matter of certification. The evaluation schedules tend to support this view, teachers on probationary contracts tend to be visited about three times per year, those eligibie for permanent certification one to two times per year, and continuing teachers once every three years. This decreasing attention on certificated or more experienced teachers also seems to indicate a focus on the legal and professional accountability of school boards to ensure that teachers have attained an acceptable level of technical expertise in their schools.

This somewhat narrow interpretation of the evaluation mandate is perhaps more understandable when conditions under which evaluations are conducted are considered. The most frequently identified evaluator is the principal. Even with the rather limited evaluation schedules (for the three major groups of teachers) it becomes clear that the principal is not in a position to fulfill much more than the minimum evaluation requirements if the traditional classroom observation is employed.

The comparison with Burger's findings also supports the legalistic focus of current evaluation policies: less emphasis on self- and peer supervision, and more emphasis on evaluation of probationary teachers. The fact that the superintendent has replaced the evaluator as the first level of appeal also supports this notion, as does the fact that the number of policies without appeal specifications has dropped.

The current policies, then, appear to reflect the conditions in the field: limited number of personnel authorized to perform evaluations and an increasingly litigious climate.

Burger, in his critique of the policies he studied, used a much broader definition of evaluation that included both the formative and summative functions and implied continuing contact with teachers for the purpose of professional development.

It appears that the school jurisdictions are obliged to split the two functions, instead of building in a "balance between evaluation for personnel decisions and teachers' personal professional development" (Burger & Bumbarger, 1991, p. 12). The realities of fiscal restraint and the attendant unsurmountable difficulties faced by school jurisdictions perhaps warrant the split of the two functions—professional accountability and professional development—and other means for providing professional development and ongoing improvement of instruction should be sought. If, rather than working one-on-one, professional development of teachers were embedded in an ongoing school-wide professional development program, then central office and school administration could be involved in improvement-of-instruction initiatives and exercise meaningful leadership in this area within the existing constraints of time and resources.

Although all schools are involved in some type of professional development, these activities are often of an ad hoc nature and hence lack coherence, continuity, and strategic planning. In order to achieve this coherence, professional development, as the second function of teacher evaluation, would have to be legitimated in a separate policy, with the same requirement for the articulation of process, timelines, and personnel, as is currently the case with teacher evaluation policies.

Thus the Superintendent can still exercise leadership in instructional improvement in today's context, although different mechanisms will have to be used to achieve this.

A separate policy should also accord a greater degree of importance to professional development than is currently the case: The frequencies of evaluation visits indicate that a priority is given to evaluations for contractual and certification purposes. In addition to ensuring complementarity between the evaluation and professional development policies, there must also be coherence between these policies and the overall policy orientation of the school system.

Complementary Policies

In order to develop such complementary policies, one might start by examining the declared purposes Why are we evaluating? and What are we looking for in an evaluation? Using the three most frequently stated purposes plus "professional development" (seventh most frequent purpose) as they appear in current policies across the province, the answers would be roughly as follows:

Why are we evaluating?	*What* are we evaluating?
improvement of instruction (88.6% provincially)	There appears to be no specifically defined focus: "improvement of instruction" seems to be the underlying reason for the next two items below. It seems to be implied that instruction is improved when central office ensures that only those candidates who meet the proficiency criteria are kept in the system, while those "failing to meet evaluation criteria" or performing "below what is expected" would either improve or leave.
contractual decisions (77.7%); (dismissal as a specific category was 63.1%)	Meeting local teaching standards (usually classroom control and presentation of material), as determined by evaluator.
professional development (52.3%)	Meeting the above criteria, sometimes adding other aspects such as "student evaluation, knowledge of curriculum, personal and professional qualities, appearance,

aspects of being a staff member" as determined by evaluator.

Some policies imply some ongoing work with the teacher by distinguishing between informal and formal, or formative and summative, evaluations, but ultimately the teachers are judged according to their performance on a given set of criteria. In most cases the performance is rated as satisfactory/unsatisfactory. In some cases a Likert scale is used. The frequency of use of satisfactory/unsatisfactory versus Likert scale is approximately 7:1. Improvement of instruction is described variously as: using "performance criteria to identify satisfactory and unsatisfactory practices"; "identify areas of performance that do not meet with the school board standards"; and "to communicate to the individual what is expected of him [sic] and the degree to which his supervisor feels he is meeting his responsibilities."

The above two aspects of evaluation dealing with accountability (contractual and certification) are somewhat better defined and similar in terms of criteria than the professional development component. The accountability evaluations essentially deal with two categories of teachers: (a) candidates for inclusion (especially the permanent kind: continuing contract or permanent certification); and (b) candidates for exclusion. In both cases it is the legal obligation of central office to get involved, measure the candidate against some generally agreed on criteria of teaching proficiency, and exercise their authority to make a decision based on the results of the evaluation.

The lower frequency of professional development being declared as a purpose of evaluation implies that it is an activity done after the accountability criteria are satisfied. The results of evaluations aimed at professional development are therefore not likely to be used for contractual or certification decisions, probably because the teachers in this category are already on continuing contracts or, to use terminology consistent with the first two categories above, the teachers are already included or "in." These teachers have passed the accountability test, are deemed by central office to be proficient and, according to the lower frequencies of evaluations, do not require the same type of surveillance as teachers in the first two categories. This group of teachers is different also in the sense that their needs most likely go beyond ensuring teaching proficiency. It is clear that their professional development needs are better accommodated in the school context through some type of ongoing mechanism than by a visit once every three years by a central office or school administrator.

It appears that two separate policies would better address the above three categories of teachers: one focusing on accountability (inclusion and exclusion categories) and one focusing on professional development going beyond the achievement of teaching proficiency. This would clarify the purposes of the policies and the status of teachers in each group. The policy development should not be problematic with respect to the first two categories because most existing policies already address these two cases in sufficient detail, so that the only new component would be the definition of the relationship between the three categories and the two policies. It is the third category that will require considerable leadership, foresight, and creativity on the part of school boards and central office administrators. The administration should consider the context both within and without the school jurisdiction.

Policies in Context

In order to examine the context in which the evaluation and professional development policies will operate, the board might ask some of the following questions: What are the provincial trends in education? What is the philosophy of the board, its teachers, parents, and community? What are the needs of the students and teachers? What resources are likely to be available? How will the evaluation policies relate to the board's current mission statement and goals? In considering the context the school board should be proactive and consider school reform trends that span provincial and national boundaries: Which trends are likely to have impact in Alberta? For example, professional development is related to teacher professionalism and teacher empowerment, two concepts that are readily identified with the "second wave" of reform that has been influencing developments in the United States education system in the last decade. Debates on these issues, and a related issue of accountability for educational results, are informing strategic plans and reform strategies at both the local and provincial levels in Alberta.

Context External to the School

Some of the most discussed school reform issues include:

Teacher Professionalization and the Future Role of Teachers

More choice for parents and students: This theme has been surfacing in a number of more or less informed public discussions, to which urban boards generally responded by claiming that they already offer choice. Although this is true to various degrees at least among urban boards, it is likely that a trend toward greater degree of choice will continue. Such a trend will possibly entail more specialization among schools within a district, greater instructional and curricular autonomy for teachers (teacher empowerment), and possible evolution of some type of site-based management with greater participation of parents.

More stress on accountability for educational results. There are conflicting notions of what and how teachers should teach ("teacher-proof" curriculum versus legitimized exercise of professional judgment), what the "results" should be, and how they should be measured. School boards have to make sense of the demands for excellence, competitive performance, "back to basics," teaching thinking and problem solving skills, integrated curriculum, emphasis on process, performance on departmental or national tests, to list a few. Although some of these requirements come from the provincial level, others come from the local level, often in apparent or real contradiction of each other.

These trends give a professional development policy a much more prominent role in the functioning of a school system than is currently the case (one only needs to examine the programs that are being cut by school boards as a result of present and impending funding shortages to find a variety of professional development initiatives among them). These trends would also affect the school board's role: it would have to exercise leadership in providing coordination and coherence among instructionally semiautonomous school units.

Internal Context

Professional development would occur as part of each school's yearly plan. Thus professional development would probably start with a needs assessment that would include a diagnostic evaluation of what the staff has been doing and whether this still meets the needs of the students and parents. An action plan for the following year would involve the identification of priorities, implementation strategy, and identification of specific professional development activities needed to enable teachers to implement the plan. This approach to professional development would probably satisfy the continuing teacher category better than an evaluation visit every three years coupled with ad hoc one-day professional development activities, as often happens now. This approach also acknowledges teacher growth in moving from the technical expertise metaphor to professional judgment. The task of the school board would be to ensure that all school plans fit a coherent whole, and that initiatives stemming from those plans, such as professional development, are properly supported.

The above discussion considers only a few aspects of local administration whose policies may impinge on the professional development policies. In all the school system, policies should be coherent and directed toward a common vision.

If school boards and schools proceed in the direction of more choice and professional empowerment, then there will be a greater demand on Alberta Education to articulate what is meant by results in a results-based evaluation and to provide clear, nonconflicting curricular policies.

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Chapter 4

Stakeholders' Views on Teacher Evaluation Policy and Practices

What has been the impact of teacher evaluation on teachers and students in Alberta? How well have policies on teacher evaluation been implemented? To what extent are teacher evaluation policies and practices being refined? How are and how should teachers be evaluated? Seven years after the adoption of a provincial policy on teacher evaluation, where are we, and where are we going? The purpose of this phase of the study was to seek the perceptions of a variety of key opinion leaders and stakeholders in education in Alberta of the policies and practices of teacher evaluation. Individuals from Alberta Education, the three trustees' associations (ASBA, ACSTA, PSBAA), the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), and the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) were interviewed. They were not asked to provide the "official" organizational position, but rather to discuss their personal views. These stakeholders are informed individuals whose understandings are derived from personal experience, from shared knowledge, and from intuitive examinations of the issues. In many cases, their perceptions shape the decisions that are made regarding provincial and local teacher evaluation policies and practices. Their voices are significant in this current discussion.

A series of questions was asked of trustees, superintendents, teachers (local ATA elected representatives), senior officials from Alberta Education, CASS, trustees' associations, and the ATA, to determine their general perceptions about teacher evaluation policies in Alberta, and teacher evaluation practice in general. In all 21 individuals were interviewed. Their comments, as one would expect, often reflect perspectives that are indicative of their positions and organizational affiliations. In reporting the conversations that took place, all participants are identified in such a way that their organizational backgrounds are evident. For example, an ATA executive member or staff officer is identified by the use of the acronym ATA. A trustee or ASBA official is identified as ASBA. The use of their organizational affiliation as an identifier does not suggest, however, that they were necessarily speaking on behalf of that particular group.

In this report the voices of the respondents are used to portray the range of opinions that were offered. Each question posed in the interview is followed by a range of responses selected from the transcripts. The order of responses is random. In some cases the interview discussions led well beyond the initial framework of questions. These additional comments are presented, also under relevant headings. A general summary of the data is provided in conclusion, with a few observations and reflections.

What has been the impact of the provincial and local teacher evaluation policies on teachers and teaching?

CASS: I think one of the impacts it's had is that there is teacher evaluation going on. Prior to the requirement there was very, very little teacher evaluation going on.... I think there has been a lot of work on developing expertise in terms of evaluating teachers.... Most of us have never really had any training in how to evaluate.... Teachers have become more involved in practices such as peer coaching, which is good in that it's directed toward improving the quality of instruction. Teacher evaluation is more about trying to improve teachers than about rating them. I don't know how much it's done about removing the ones that should be removed.... The provincial policy was the catalyst to get teacher evaluation going because there was very little push at the local level to get it done.

Alberta Education: Having the provincial policy has increased awareness of the need to do something in the area. I think prior to that, teacher evaluation was not held in high regard or done consistently across the province.... It's difficult to talk about the actual impact on teaching. I really don't know.... The original intent of the provincial policy was to help the profession, to help teachers. The intent was very positive.

Trustees' Associations: Well, I think that for some time there has been some concern as to the competency of the teacher in the classroom. The evaluation process is essential from the boards' perspective to ensure that there is a level of confidence within our school systems.... I think that it takes some time to deal with evaluation in a productive way, because evaluation is always viewed with some concern by the person who is being evaluated. It can be seen as a threat rather than an opportunity to develop new skills and competencies.

ATA: The impact that provincial and local policy has had varies by jurisdiction. It would appear that the provincial policy was interpreted by some boards as an instrument for summative evaluation, to deal with making judgments about competence. The announcement made in 1983-84 that we would all have teacher evaluation policies came hard on the heels of the Keegstra case.

CASS: We were pleased to see the provincial policy implemented because it was where we were. It was a reinforcing rather than an initiating action for us. We were there a bit ahead.... We're very comfortable with the way it is now, not comfortable to the point of doing nothing, however, but it is one area where our principals are well versed.

Alberta Education: The biggest impact from my perspective has been in the development of procedures that sustain performance and that hold up in the process of making personnel decisions.... I'm not so sure that evaluation policies have had an impact on the improvement of instruction.

ATA: I think there is a heightened awareness of evaluation, which is good.... We have written evaluations every year. I think it has had some good and some bad effects. The good one is, once again, heightening the awareness of evaluation. I think that a lot of teachers feel good about their principals knowing what they are doing.... I think for most of us it is a very positive feeling and a very positive process. I am personally very happy to share my plans for the year with my administrator and then sit down at the end and talk about it. I am always happy to get a written evaluation that is positive. I think that when the immediate supervisor has to evaluate everybody, every year, there is the danger that some of the evaluations will be quickly done or shoddily done, and I know that the teachers are not feeling it as much as the administrators. Year after year, it is becoming a lot of work to give that written document, and it is probably not time well spent to require a written one every year.

Trustees' Associations: I don't think the provincial policy had any significant impact at all. I believe that most of the local jurisdictions in this province had policies in place. The provincial policy, if it had any sort of impact, was perhaps to spur a handful of boards that hadn't got this all together yet. Every time people from our legal services went to court on a Board of Reference you could pretty well predict whether or not the board was going to win simply on whether or not they had a policy in place. And a lot of these policies and processes were in place long before the Management Finance Plan (MFP) came along. The MFP requirement for teacher evaluation policies, as I recall, came relatively hard on the heels of Keegstra's loss of his final appeal. The concept of natural justice had to be addressed—there had to be steps in the whole thing and warnings and discussion and revealing to the teacher and help provided; these are components that are in the provincial policy.

ATA: It would have been around the year '85/'86 that our jurisdiction hired a school administrator to move into central office for a half year or a year to assist the superintendent and assistant superintendent to conduct teacher evaluations.... So there was in some respects a greater emphasis placed on teacher evaluation. I think they have kept that up. They no longer use an interim administrator, though. We now have in place an assistant superintendent. They are all making more classroom visits, they stay more in touch with individual teachers.

Alberta Education: The whole matter of teacher evaluation was of concern to us in our efforts at improving the educational system and focusing more on results. The concern really evolved as part of our Management Finance Plan, in which we said we would provide direction to school jurisdictions via policy, and would provide for local discretion on how we achieve those directions. In order to ensure that the local direction was in place, we asked school boards to develop policies reflecting the provincial policy, which was intended to be broad in nature. So our provincial policy was that teachers should be evaluated periodically, and the results noted, and that improvements be made where improvements were necessary.... We're in the process of constantly encouraging reapplication, implementation of the policy, with the view of improving teaching and subsequently learning. I'm not sure that we can do very much to improve our provincial policy so it would have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

Trustees' Associations: If you can characterize it visually, it was your classic start-up curve: initially there was a gentle slope, becoming steeper and steeper. I would say that the impact of the provincial and local initiatives would at this moment be just about at the point where that curve could take off quite steeply, but it hasn't. In other words I don't think that evaluation has yet had nearly the impact on the system that it is going to have, presuming its continued operation for another five to seven years.

ATA: In my own case, I have been teaching for a long time and I have been evaluated twice in my entire career. I never felt that evaluation necessarily made a teacher better all those years. I felt I had a job to do and I did it. I think teachers are responsible to keep themselves current professionally.

CASS: It's a hard one to answer, but I think the impact of teacher evaluation is one of professional growth more than anything else.... We're trying to challenge teachers to identify areas where they want to grow professionally.... We have a policy that principals evaluate teachers every five years. Whether that has actually made a difference in individual teacher performance, I can't say.... There was a policy in place here prior to the provincial statement, so I would have to say that it didn't have much impact.

ATA: There are some local policies that provide a remarkable opportunity for unfairness.... There are policies where the jurisdiction says it believes summative and formative evaluations are virtually interchangeable. They believe that they can simultaneously complete a process that uses as a starting place teachers' own descriptions of their weaknesses and conclude with an evaluator's view of the appropriateness of the teacher. The teacher's honesty can become a liability.

Alberta Education: I feel that it has had a positive impact to the extent that administration now feels it is incumbent upon them to do teacher evaluation, and I don't believe principals felt it was really their job to go in and do this. After a series of inservice sessions, I believe that principals did start to say, "yes, this is my responsibility." The extent to which it has improved instruction, in other words, now teachers are better, personnel decisions are being made, I can't say that it's made a startling difference to how people teach. All I know is that people are paying more attention to teacher evaluation.

Trustees' Associations: It had a sort of demonstration effect, a publicity effect. Policies may have been there, but I don't think they were implemented across the board with that much diligence. I sense there is a greater level of awareness on the part of trustees, a realization of its importance.

CASS: It's given a sharper focus to the practice, the teaching craft.... I think that it's brought a greater responsibility on the part of jurisdictions to monitor what's going on in the classrooms much more closely. As a result quality of instruction is better because teachers are focusing on their role as practitioner.

ATA: You know you can sense what's going on in the classroom even if you're not the principal and then you see the principal going in and you see the classroom changing. So in that sense I think the leadership that administration is taking for formative evaluation particularly is making a great difference in the learning climate in the classroom.

Trustees' Associations: I don't really know whether teachers and teaching have improved as a result of the policies. What I think I've seen is some improvement in utilization of the policies at the jurisdictional level. In other words, they are actually starting to follow in practice what the policies very nicely said in theory. That's improved the opportunities for boards to be successful in terminating a teacher and making sure it stuck.

CASS: In our school district it has had a fairly large impact. We made teacher evaluation a district priority, and we didn't do it because we had to.... We tried to implement this policy honestly, and to provide inservice for the people who had to carry it out—the principals and vice-principals—and the deputy-superintendent coordinated all of this.

ATA: I do not think that this evaluation policy has had the effect that the provincial government hoped for. The effect has not been negative. However, the effect could be much more positive with a few changes.

CASS: I think the provincial policy did have an impact, not necessarily in terms of teacher evaluation, but in terms of the responsibility of principals. They are more associated with the ATA. It was difficult for them to be in an evaluation situation.... In the end it's been good. There was a fair amount of anticipation at first, for some of them, feeling that they were in a conflict situation, because it was hard for them to help a teacher who was having difficulties. They were seen as colleagues.

Trustees' Associations: It's made a difference because I think, from most teachers' perspectives, it makes them feel a little more comfortable that there is a process in place that lets them know how their work is going to be checked and evaluated. I can only suspect that prior to a policy of some kind being required there was always the fear that if you got on the wrong side of the board chairman your job was in jeopardy.

To increase effectiveness of teaching, what kinds of refinements are needed: (a) to policies, and (b) to the practice of evaluation?

CASS: We just revised our policy last year because we are moving more toward professional development.... Our evaluation report is a very detailed, narrative type, which is very demanding on the person writing it, so we changed from evaluations every three years to every five.

Alberta Education: I believe collectively we have to come to grips with what it is a teacher should do—what the responsibilities of the teachers are. While we are doing that we also have to define what the responsibilities of administration are, of school boards, parents, and even students. We have to lay out mandates, what I would call stakeholder mandates. Once we've laid this out, then we have to hold those people accountable. Right now the mandate is fuzzy.... What's expected of teachers is that they're professionals, they will adapt to new situations, to new curriculum, to new teaching strategies. It's incumbent upon the profession to remain current, alive, and up to standard. The department, administration, and boards have to support that, they have to support the efforts of teachers. I think right now too much is being ducked. I think once we lay out unequivocally what are the responsibilities of teachers, boards, and administration, no one's going to duck their responsibilities.

Trustees' Associations: I don't believe evaluation is properly done after the fact unless you have been very clear in communicating to people as they commence an undertaking what your expectations are of them. I don't think there are very many boards in this province and I don't think that Alberta Education does a good job of communicating to teachers what their expectations are.... I think that the time has come that we should reflect back on the source of the drive for evaluation. It makes a big difference to evaluation whether you see the goal of the school as being primarily to acculturate children, draw them into the culture, or primarily to prepare them for employment, or primarily to offer remedies for social ills, or primarily to teach students to think critically, to work with knowledge. It's not likely that any board sees its schools as being entirely of one model or another. Boards have got to reflect on the paradigm of education that they are following in their system. It follows that in evaluation they have got to address the question of what world view the teachers have.

I don't think that any superintendent or principal can do a very good job of evaluating teachers in a system that doesn't have a mission statement and a strategic plan. There is a heavy obligation on boards to commit to paper their strategic intentions. Without that I suspect that evaluation has to be occurring on a fairly superficial level.

ATA: A few jurisdictions are developing policies and procedures that match the purpose of the evaluation with the process. For example, for first year teachers there is one type of evaluation for the purpose of determining whether a continuing contract will be offered, and for certification purposes. A second policy addresses the need for competent teachers to participate in continuous development. A third policy provides a mechanism to deal with teachers who are experiencing difficulty.

CASS: The instrumentation of teacher evaluation continues to be refined, both for teachers and for teachers as principals and vice-principals.

ATA: I think the way most principals are evaluating their teachers right now is by refining teaching practice. Our awareness of what we are doing and our goal setting process has been refined, and for a lot of teachers it is the first time in our careers that we have had somebody interested in a formal and positive way in what we are doing in our classrooms.

CASS: COATS is trying to develop a list of what one would call indigenous teaching areas, strengths that you would look for in any candidate at any particular time. I think that those will be valuable providing that they are shared with the stakeholder groups.

At the local level we review our policy yearly in the hope that whatever has been revealed through contemporary scholarship can be incorporated into the policy. We look at incorporating elements in our policy that reflect initiatives of the jurisdiction. For example, we have a mission statement, and I look to see in every evaluation how a teacher has incorporated that particular mission statement in a particular unit, or in a monthly or yearly plan.

Trustees' Associations: Boards have, generally, been working very hard at developing their own policies on evaluation. They see that as an essential responsibility within their jurisdiction. I think the frustration boards have is that many would like to see their teachers evaluated more often. The reality of the work load is it's very difficult to have that happen.

The ASBA has a policy on permanent certification. The feeling of boards has been that teachers shouldn't be granted permanent certification. There should be a method for recertification on an ongoing basis.

ATA: [Central office administrators] don't actually come out and say, "These are our policies that we want you to adhere to." I think they really feel that as individuals we're all going to be teaching in different ways anyway. To my knowledge they never sent us any specific policies that they wanted us to follow in terms of teacher effectiveness. When they do come to evaluate us they work with us as individuals to improve our teaching.... I think that's one of the strengths within this system.... We're free to be ourselves teaching as long as we stay within the limits: kind of unwritten rules.

CASS: I don't think we know much about evaluation. I think that most people are very, very afraid to do it and most people are reluctant to have it done to them. Being the principal and evaluating your staff is a very, very daunting and scary proposition. You can't be all that honest most of the time or you're going to find yourself sitting out in left field.... I don't know if teacher evaluation is the most appropriate vehicle for improving teaching. The model that we use requires that people be evaluated in terms of their jobs. A businessman is evaluated on the basis of the bottom line, but in teaching there's really no accountability. Teachers work very hard at ensuring that the few measures of accountability that might be used are not used: like achievement tests or provincial tests or diploma exams. I would probably agree that maybe we shouldn't use them to measure a teacher's success, but they certainly should be one of the components that go into measuring how well a teacher does or maybe how well the teaching in a school is doing. Why should the teacher in grade 12 be hung for the results of the 11 years prior to that?

I wonder if one of the answers is eventually to have teaching as a profession where every teacher in the school has to become concerned with the quality of instruction that's practiced in that school. We don't have the union mentality here; we have the professional mentality, which says, "Charlie, you aren't carrying your share here. Now we're going to work on improving but we are going to work on you as a professional. This is not something that the superintendent is going to do to you, or the principal; this is something that you are going to have to do for yourself and we're going to help you."

Supervision per se doesn't do anything for anybody unless the person for whom it's being done is actively involved in the process and becomes convinced that there's merit to improving.

Trustees' Associations: I'm still not satisfied that we are doing enough in the way of summative evaluation. I'm not satisfied that we use evaluation properly or well to recognize people who should not be in the teaching profession or should not stay in the teaching profession without some significant remediation in their style and practice. We are concentrating on formative evaluation and in large measure that's proper because for most teachers that's what is required. I think we are neglecting summative evaluation because we are afraid of it.

ATA: We can expand on what we have. I realize that there has to be evaluation for permanent certification. I think that what we need to do is work on formative evaluation.... Surely the University of Alberta and the practicum program should be able to screen out people who are not capable of teaching. First and foremost there has to be effective evaluation in the teacher training, in the preservice program.... Assuming that the University is doing its job in the preservice, and assuming teachers are placed where they should be relative to their training, then I think what we need to do is look at areas such as mentoring, having teachers work with one another, having teachers observe one another, all of that in the formative evaluation process.

CASS: I think that we need to grow up a little in education. Perhaps by the nature of our business we have become traditionally very hooked on process. We've always assumed that if the process was in place, learning took place. As long as we could assure the public that the process is in place, everything is fine. I believe that evaluation will become much more results-based in its outlook. This isn't going to happen overnight, of course, because we have to become much more sophisticated about how we evaluate students. We need to stop trying to dictate process to everyone and start worrying about identifying what outcomes we want for students, and then start holding people responsible for those outcomes. We probably need collaborative teams in schools that would take on the total responsibility for groups of students.... I think that teacher evaluation as we know it now would probably become redundant except in a few extreme cases. We have to find ways to give the profession back to the professionals.

ATA: Teachers often have trouble deciding if the evaluation they are experiencing is formative or summative. This may be because the teacher is not familiar with the evaluation policy or because the administrator has sent mixed messages about the true reason for the evaluation. Formative evaluation by classroom peers with some guidance by school administrators is seen by most teachers as much more beneficial than evaluation by school administrators only.

Alberta Education: At the policy level we've done as much as I think we need to do. I wouldn't want to compromise the intent of what we are doing by then coming forward and saying, "Here are some local policies you have to have." We can refine what it is that local policies should include in their teacher evaluation structure.... We are looking at asking the institutions that prepare beginning teachers to certify that these teachers have these skills and competencies. The same skills and competencies can certainly be referenced in teacher evaluation policies at the local level subsequent to our developing them.

My ideal would be to have a more definitive evaluation, sort of a diagnostic kind of evaluation of teaching, to determine what problems a teacher might have, where the areas of weakness are, and then to have the capacity to give that teacher the skills to overcome these. It's fine to evaluate teachers and say that we want to help them do a better job, but unless we have the resources and capacity to help that teacher do a better job, we're in real difficulty.

Trustees' Associations: The policies from a legal perspective have generally been OK; there's nothing wrong with the policies. As long as there's a logical progression and as long as the intent of the policy is clear, there's no problem.

In your opinion have school systems and school principals shown a high amount of leadership and initiative in implementing the teacher evaluation policies?

Alberta Education: I would say that the majority of school systems fall in the range of fairly good to good and very good. We've got some at the tail end that are exceptional, and some at the tail end that are poor. It's just basically a normal distribution. I'm continually pleasantly surprised by the reports I get from our regional offices about teacher evaluation policies working well.

CASS: Yes, they have. I've always been very pleased.... Central offices and principals got involved with programs that were geared toward improving their ability to evaluate.

ATA: Well, the question assumes that only school systems and school principals showed leadership and initiative in teacher evaluation policies. I'm not sure that's a fair assumption. Teacher evaluation affects everyone and probably, across the board, an increased level of leadership and initiative was provided.

CASS: When I first joined the School Division, it was difficult for the principals to tune into the "new age" as brought on by the School Act. I've always taken the position that the School Act clearly and without any ambiguity identified that the principal was the pedagogical leader of the school, and as such I believe that the principal should play a major role in evaluation of staff. They still feel uncomfortable with it from the point of view that it does create, in difficult times, some staff tension, but I think it's part and parcel of the job.... What I have to do is assist them. I put them in touch with evaluation seminars. It's a practice that is only developed through discussion and practice. Seminars and workshops help to hone the skills. As much as we might like to think that principals have good skills in the area, there's nothing else in their daily job that has the same kind of "life and death" effect when we are talking about someone's career being on the line. Some principals shy away from it, and they have to be encouraged by giving them the appropriate skills to deal with it. We have to realize when they are out of their depth, when it's getting beyond their competency or comfort level.

Alberta Education: In my opinion, I think it is a very broken front. I don't think there is a consistent message across the province. My travels across the province still lead me to believe that teacher evaluation at the school level is not a high priority in some areas.

ATA: As a district, they developed a policy, which was that every employee (not just teachers) will be evaluated every year in a written form. They developed it that way and then basically threw it out to the schools and said that you will develop a process. I think to start with it was a little haphazard.... It was pretty shaky to start with because the teachers didn't know what a good process was, and whether this was going to be worthwhile and that sort of thing. As the years pass we are finding two things. First of all, it is a good process.... We are also finding that it is very, very time consuming for the principal. I have to really compliment the principals. Principals obviously believe that if they are going to do it, they are going to do it right.

Trustees' Associations: I would say that the initiatives have come more from the senior administration level than the school principal level. In some cases, because of the "collegial" problem principals have been reluctant dragons in carrying out evaluations, particularly if they had to say something negative.

CASS: I don't think the quality of the evaluation reports is that good. I've seen some of the reports that were written in other jurisdictions on teachers we have hired. The reports are weak. I think that is one area that could be improved.

ATA: I don't know how much leadership and initiative they took. I think they had the gun pointed at their heads. The government says thou shalt do it by such and such a date. Reluctantly it happened.

Alberta Education: From my point of view, leadership and teacher evaluation are linked completely, in that instructional leadership should be the primary responsibility of the school administration. It's in the School Act; it's in the literature. Managing the school is fine, but what it really comes down to is that schools are there to serve students through the programs and through instruction. So the greatest good a principal can do in the school is to pay a lot of attention to the instructional program, part of which is to see how teachers are performing their jobs. The whole leadership function is very closely linked to teacher evaluation, from my perspective, and it's done to varying degrees of effectiveness—in some schools it is done very well; in others it is marginal.

Trustees' Associations: I think that most of what has happened locally has been the result of decisions made by members of staff responding to the messages they have received from Alberta Education. I see very little evidence that trustees really understand and value evaluation. I see them adopting policies that are recommended to them by their superintendents with greater or less enthusiasm, but I don't see many situations in which the initiative for something innovative, something comprehensive, has come from trustees.... I think you should expect of trustees political leadership.... Trustees should be the kinds of people who are thinking about and are on the leading edge of issues that are likely to make a significant difference in the community, and evaluation is one of those.

How well do you think the intent of the original provincial teacher evaluation policy is being observed across the province?

Trustees' Associations: Generally speaking, there is better teacher evaluation going on today than there once was. I'm fairly impressed with what is going on.

ATA: I think that this process [with reference to a goal setting process of evaluation], when done well, does help you improve.... As you know teaching can be a very isolated activity and you don't ever have anyone seeing what you are doing, and you don't get that many opportunities to see what other people are doing. Providing those opportunities to have people in your classroom and to have other teachers teaching and modeling for you, and you also observing in other people's classrooms, is probably the best way to go, to learn. I don't think we have enough of those opportunities.

Trustees' Associations: The intent of the policy was not to get teachers fired; the intent of the policy is to see how teachers are doing, where their weaknesses are, and to improve in those areas of weakness. We have not attended to the evaluation of this element of the policy at all.

ATA: We have spent vast amounts of energy and resources "certifying competency." It is a huge waste of time. The process that we have set up says, "tell me one more time that you're competent." In the vast majority of cases this is completely unnecessary.

Trustees' Associations: The way we have applied the policy suggests that all we need to do is continue doing what we have been doing for years, but do it better. What we need to do is change the entire way we approach the teaching and learning area. We have to develop learning systems that make it possible for all students to avail themselves of the best that technology and our knowledge of learning psychology can provide. In this context the role of the teacher will have to change and so will the manner in which we will evaluate teachers. The current policy does nothing to encourage the development or application of these new, more advanced ways of teaching. In our lifetime teaching is going to be changed, and it's going to be capitalizing on technology to turn people loose to do what they do best—to work with other people in a caring, nurturing, facilitating relationship.

Alberta Education: The intent, this goes back to the early '80s, was just to pay more attention to teaching performance.... People are paying more attention to it.

ATA: I hear the opinion of some teachers from different parts of the province that they feel some superintendents and principals are overevaluating teachers. Much of this evaluation seems to be of a summative nature for all teachers, which is of little value. More formative evaluation with an emphasis on growth and improvement would be a benefit to the whole educational community, especially students.

ATA: They [central office administrators and the principal] are definitely visiting us on a more regular basis than they have in the past.

Trustees' Associations: I think the intent of the original policy is being pretty well observed across the province, but it is time to revisit the original policy. It is time to recognize the need for some change both provincially and locally.

CASS: We feel that teacher evaluation has improved instruction in the classroom. The whole process we've gone through has made our principals and assistant principals much more aware of good instruction, and they are able to provide much better instructional leadership than they could in the past. We really feel that it has made an improvement. It's more because of all the in-servicing that we've done, even talking with our teachers about what we are doing and what we were looking for, and making them aware of a lot of new techniques.

ATA: Policies have done nothing to help in the formation of the already competent teacher.

Alberta Education: We don't have any direct evidence that the policy is achieving the intent that was desired. When we do our school evaluations, and system evaluations, our staff do look at teacher evaluation policies and whether in fact they are being followed. As near as we can determine there is certainly more work to be done in that area.

CASS: How can we tell if teacher evaluation is working? The model we use, and probably the one most people use, is teacher growth and development. One measure that we can use is the degree to which teachers continue to access professional development opportunities that we make available to them.

Trustees' Associations: How do you measure the effectiveness of the provincial or the local policies? Do you measure it by counting the wins and losses at the Board of Reference level? I don't think those measures should be used. That seems to be the only measure we can readily get our hands on. But that's not the intent of the policies. We haven't yet figured out a way of measuring the intent of the provincial policy, that there would be improved instruction or effective teaching.

ATA: Although we've had competency terminations for the first time, I'm not sure that we would say that an increased number of teachers have been dismissed as a result of lack of competency. What has happened in some cases is that the actual procedures used to dismiss a teacher were not based on what was written in the policy.

CASS: I think that a lot of the evaluation is done because it has to be done, and it's done well enough to pass inspection, but it's not really done in terms of having an effect on changing behavior or dealing with incompetence in some people. I don't know how far you'll ever get with evaluation per se.

ATA: My real honest opinion? In the beginning a lot of teachers felt that evaluation was a power and control mechanism, that somebody was going to decide who was boss and therefore we will put the teachers through all of this.... I don't know if I still think that but I did feel that. I think that provincial governments across the country, not just our provincial government, were being criticized about the quality of education and what was going on in the schools. One of the ways that they felt that we could make it look like we were doing something is to get on to this teacher evaluation bit.... However, I do think that it was accepted once there was a trust relationship built up with the administration in the school and it was perceived to be fair.

CASS: The profile of evaluation, and the importance of it, has certainly been raised in our system and throughout the province. I think that the provincial policy did force a lot of school systems to have a look at what they are doing, and how they are doing it, so in that sense I think it's been very positive. I'm not sure that we're all using pedagogically sound, theory-based techniques for evaluation.... I think that someone really had a vision that this was going to ensure that boards were getting rid of a lot of marginal teachers and kooks and that kind of thing. I don't think that has happened, but I think we are certainly much more tuned into teaching processes.

Alberta Education: These kinds of policies are directed ultimately at some form of result, and we have continued to increase our focus on results. This should preclude their atrophying because the incentive, the need to have these policies implemented, continues.... These policies may be found to be wanting, and they may have to be improved.

I would guess that the degree to which teacher evaluation is done effectively is related to the extent to which the board has been involved in it and is interested in the outcome, and to the extent to which the superintendent has brought this to the board's attention. Where we've got good administrative people, the key tends to be the superintendent, we have a good evaluation policy.

I would say that in terms of the number of boards who have a policy, it's in the nine to 10 range. The number of boards who have implemented a policy, probably in the six to seven range. And the number who have implemented it effectively, probably in the five to six range. I'm talking about effectively tying it together carefully.

The achievement test results reflect that overall there has been a significant improvement in teaching and learning in this province.... We've seen some significant improvements, and I would attribute that at least in part to teacher evaluation, as well as to the fact that we have better curriculum and better tools for teaching.

Trustees' Associations: I think there is a growing sense of comfort in the area of teacher evaluation. Naturally there are always going to be situations where a parent may feel the evaluation is not stringent enough.

Trustees' Associations: I think administrators, principals, those required to carry out the policies on evaluation, are doing a better job generally speaking. They are being more observant, they are being better documenters, they are being more honest in their observations, especially when they are dealing with a teacher whom they view as weak. They're being a little more honest about saying, "you're a weak teacher."

CASS: I think teachers are being visited more. In the olden days some teachers were rarely visited, if at all. In our jurisdiction now teachers are visited fairly regularly, so we know what's going on. As far as initiating change, I think that's questionable. If they are average to good teachers, I think that change is being initiated. If they are professional in their practices, I'm not sure the impact is having the affect it was really intended to have.... The intent of the provincial policy was fine. I want to know what practices really help to initiate change, and for us to work effectively as a province to work these out.

What processes should be used in the evaluation of teachers?

CASS: There are two very important components of effective teacher evaluation. One is self-evaluation and self-analysis. That's where it should start. Teachers should be encouraged and supported to go through a self-analysis of their performance and identify what they do really well, and some areas that they might like to work on. When a teacher and principal sit down to do the formal teacher evaluation, it should be based to a large extent on teacher self-identified areas of need. Second, there has to be accountability built in. The principal, as the primary supervisor, should be able to identify some areas of potential growth. And there should be an opportunity for the principal to identify clearly that the teacher is competent.... In our teacher performance reviews we talk about interpersonal skills, curriculum skills, leadership skills, and so on. I think that any system needs to have clearly delineated role descriptions for teachers that say we expect our capable teachers to demonstrate competence in these areas, and these should be detailed and outlined so that it's clear when teachers do a self-analysis that they think about these categories. When the principals work with the teachers, they should have in their minds an image of an effective teacher.

Alberta Education: Teacher evaluation involves the principal actually getting into the classrooms, through a process of observation. While there, the principal is observing instruction, meeting with the teacher, and dialoguing about instruction. It's difficult for any administrator to get into instructional leadership without having any idea of what the teacher is doing in the first place.... There should be criteria laid out up front, through workshops, inservice, and so forth. Teachers should be made aware of these and should be part of the development of what is good teaching practice. There are five basic elements: (a) preparation, (b) delivery of instruction (how teachers teach and how they conduct themselves in the classroom), (c) student evaluation—the whole assessment process and reporting to parents, (d) classroom management (to what extent does the classroom environment contribute to learning?), and (e) the personal, professional characteristics of teachers (how they model behavior, how they live as a professional, how they keep up to date in their fields).... As a superintendent I was interested in how much were kids learning. Different teachers could use different styles to get there. I believe to some extent, but not totally, that results have to figure into the equation.

ATA: The process used to evaluate teachers should be a process that works to improve teaching practices. It should assume confidence in the teacher. It should allow teachers to work together or do whatever they believe can improve their teaching.

Alberta Education: If you want to make a good evaluation system the organization has to figure out, at whatever level, what is meant by good teaching.... A good evaluation process would have to be linked to it. Maybe you have to have two different processes, one to satisfy legal accountability and the other to deal with the improvement of instruction.... You have to ensure that the teachers and administrators are given some preparation so that they understand what is going on.

CASS: Administrators should take an active role in the classroom. They shouldn't be just sitting in the back of the room. That creates a static situation.

There should be a preconference between the principal and the teacher with respect to what is going to happen, how it is going to happen, and what the teacher hopes to accomplish during the class. This also provides an opportunity to review long-term plans, reports, the kinds of things you wouldn't see in the classroom. The teacher and principal would have a chance to discuss and debate that kind of stuff. The principal then outlines the role he or she will take in the classroom, what he or she would like to do, what he or she will be involved in. The teacher then presents her or his material, over a number of visits. This is followed up with a postconference. The principal makes some observations on what was seen that was good, and points out any areas where the teacher can grow and get better. We deliberately stay away from words like, "Well, you didn't do this right." Instead, we talk about "you can enhance your performance by doing this." A criticism, if we use that term, must be followed with a suggestion of how something could be improved. We've looked at modeling—having the principal teach the concept in the way that he or she is asking the teacher to, or have the teacher visit other teachers and schools to see the preferred model in practice. Some teachers are visual learners.

Teacher evaluation has to be dynamic. It's not just walk in, sit down, observe, crank out reports, sign here. There's got to be more than that.

ATA: Not all teachers require the same type of evaluation, so we need at least three different types of policy. We need a policy for the beginning teacher, another for the established teacher who is doing a good job, and we need one for the established teacher who is encountering some difficulties. Each of these requires a clearly different focus. Most policies have done little or nothing to help in the formation of the already competent teacher or to help the incompetent teacher or teacher in difficulty overcome these difficulties.

Trustees' Associations: Emphasis has already been placed on the need to establish collegial processes to facilitate teachers assisting other teachers. Very little of this has taken place. At the same time we have to be careful about the time commitment involved and not spend so much time evaluating that we take away from the effectiveness of teaching.

Alberta Education: Teacher evaluation should be done collaboratively with teachers. One of the problems with teacher evaluation is that it tends to be top-down: administration evaluates teachers, rather than teachers collectively looking at what it is they do. Evaluation needn't be as formal as we make it. What we need to do is collectively ask teachers and administrators and systems to begin to look more at the output, which will be much more fruitful than examining how the individual teacher operates. We need to ask if the curriculum will lead to the outcomes that we desire; and if the youngster has the maturity to deal with the curriculum. And we need to look at how we are teaching the material to reach particular outcomes.

Trustees' Associations: My personal opinion is that there should be both formative and summative evaluation. Policies should be very clear, so that those who carry out the responsibility of evaluating teachers know what is expected of them, and the individual being evaluated knows precisely what the rules of the game are. They should have an opportunity to respond so that the whole process is seen in a positive way. The process of evaluation should be there to assist teachers, to help them develop skills beyond their present level, and to enhance the investment that the board has in the teacher.

ATA: I would think that most teachers feel more comfortable with the principal doing the evaluation [rather than someone from central office] because they know the person.... The principal doesn't have to be able to evaluate my [subject matter competence]. He has to be able to evaluate my class attention, classroom control, questioning techniques, and ability to attend to all the student needs.

Summative and formative evaluation has been made clear, but ... how can I go to the principal for formative evaluation when I know he's going to come to me afterward and do a summative evaluation? Do you think I'm going to tell him what's bothering me? I'm going to strut my stuff and don't give me this two hats stuff. It's just not going to wash.

The relationship may be there with the principal [a sense of trust], but I'm not prepared to say the same for central office. Sometimes the trust level from the classroom to the central office is not that good.

Trustees' Associations: I think that teaching is a very, very lonely profession and that makes evaluation difficult, it makes it easy to be spotty in your evaluation.... If we want to have better evaluation of what's going on we have to have more of a team that has some consistency to it so that there is more than one teacher in the school that really knows little Johnny.... I think a certain amount of evaluation should be done by team members.... We need to give teachers more freedom in how they evaluate students because I think our evaluation of teachers could rely a bit more on reflecting on how they themselves evaluate students.... I think we should create opportunities for the longer term observation of teachers.... I think we should open up the classroom to the presence of nonprofessionals and we should observe how teachers relate to nonprofessionals for the purpose of drawing out of them something that is useful in the education of the child.

Alberta Education: It has to be a multistage process. We need to start with an expectation of the process that everyone should be clear about. One of the things that gets us into difficulty is that people view the outcome as more summative than formative. We need to establish some clear objectives as to what the expectation of the teaching act is, so that people are aware of what we will be hoping to achieve. It shifts our focus to what outcomes we expect, what is the mission of the school, and how are we working to achieve that particular goal and how do we all play our parts in it.

Teaching is a purposeful activity, and good teaching is about reaching one's objectives. It should be goal oriented. I have a sense that every teacher has a unique personality, has a unique set of relationships, and very often we tend to evaluate teachers on the basis of how we view ourselves acting in that particular situation without looking at the outcomes or end product. You have to be humanistic and that sort of thing, but it needs to be goal oriented. If there's no learning, there's no teaching.

I think that to place teachers in a classroom setting and never give them an opportunity to work with colleagues and other individuals is patently unfair. We don't have an openness in teaching that we should. There are people who would say that we are the most regulated of professions. We have layers of administration in systems, and we have tended to box people in. On the other hand, teaching is one of the most private of all professions. I have often said that teaching is the second most private human act. We need to do more team work; in effective schools the thing that makes a difference is what some people call the "human connection." It's the relationships among people.

CASS: I think that peer coaching has definite possibilities. When I notice something that a teacher is doing really well and find a teacher that is having some difficulties in that area, I'll try to coach them to get together and to sort out the problem. We encourage teachers to visit each other and to arrange for a substitute.

To what extent should teachers have a say in determining the processes that are used to evaluate them? Who else should be involved in determining what the processes should be?

CASS: Teachers in our system have been involved right through the whole process. Of course boards have to be involved at the end, they have to approve it; and of course school administrators and central office staff. Maybe I should say students, but I don't think it's necessary. If you wanted to throw in a few students I don't think it would hurt. I don't think they would be key players.

Alberta Education: I think that teachers should have a significant say. They are primary through the whole process. It should be done more collaboratively with teachers. One of the problems with teacher evaluation is it tends to be top-down rather than teachers collectively looking at what it is they do. I don't think evaluation needs to be as formal as we make it. I think that we need to ask teachers collectively, and administrators and systems to begin to look more at output, which I think will be much more fruitful than examining how the individual teacher operates.

ATA: I think it would be good for a group of teachers, the science or math or language arts department for example, to lay out the criteria. What's most important in an evaluation for us? What do we do that's unique in our particular subject area that is different from others?

The teachers could possibly become a little bit more involved in the evaluation process. I think if they became more involved with it, even as an evaluator, I think they would become more relaxed in terms of being evaluated.

CASS: I think that teachers should be key players. When we review our teacher evaluation policies and practices we involve teachers actively. They can describe for us what they think are the characteristics of an effective teacher.

ATA: I think that times are really changing, what is happening in the classroom, the types of children, the curriculum is changing, there are massive changes. I don't think people in central offices and departments of education who never darken the door of a classroom, or even at the university for that matter, can assess what is going on, [but] the teachers can. We have a lot of good, experienced teachers who very definitely need to be consulted in this area of teacher evaluation.

CASS: I would like to say that teachers have had input into the process but I don't think that would be correct. They haven't had a whole lot. They certainly had input into the instrumentation. Basically the process is a mandated process.

ATA: Teachers themselves have to be involved in deciding what areas of their performance they wish to improve. The starting place has to be the teacher. In each situation the teacher has to be significantly involved. Even in the case of a teacher whose competency is in question, it's still a mutual activity.

Trustees' Associations: I think that laying something on teachers without their involvement is courting trouble. Principals have to be involved. The persons who are in the firing line, in a sense, should be involved to some extent in the process because what a board of trustees might think is important in evaluating a teacher may, when looked at real close, not be the crux of being a teacher in that particular environment.

Alberta Education: I think teachers are key; I think you have to involve them, both at the district and at the school level. I'm not sure that you have to have the same process at each school. Each school has to define how they want to operate.... It wouldn't hurt to have some of the public, the school council, involved.

ATA: Teachers should have a say in determining how they can become better teachers.

CASS: Certainly teachers, and the people we hold responsible for evaluations, the principals. I could see a place for senior high students to have some involvement, probably even some parents. I think you have to talk to a lot of people because the board has to be comfortable with the model.

Alberta Education: When I was a superintendent I developed a teacher evaluation policy by first going to the literature on effective teaching. I identified what I thought were the important elements of teaching, then I went to the local ATA and asked them to review the list. Over a period of months we modified the list. The teachers then had a high comfort level with the document.

ATA: The superintendent sends out draft policies for input. It's done through the staff not the [ATA] local. We were happy to work through staff input. If there was any input it would go through the principals.

Everyone seemed to be resigned to the fact, well look, this is the [new, revised] policy on evaluation. No one was really concerned about it enough to say, well, I don't like this or whatever. Usually what the board presented, that's what they went with.

CASS: I think that teachers should be very much involved in determining the process. After all, it is their responsibility to improve, it's not my responsibility as a superintendent to make them. It's their responsibility to want to improve. This should be a professional responsibility.

I have always believed that kids should be involved. We could go into a school to look at the teachers, and we could run an opinionnaire amongst kids, and I'll bet we'd be surprised at the correlation between who we think are the good teachers and who the kids think they are.

Alberta Education: It was our intent that teachers and principals have significant involvement in the process of developing teacher evaluation policies. Our intent ... was to allow for the local policy to be developed in consultation with the principals and teachers, and superintendents and trustees, to the extent that the policy needed board approval. We didn't provide a lot of involvement in the development of the provincial policy, but involvement should occur, justifiably in my view, at the local level.

Clearly students and parents shouldn't be excluded from the process. I think the process should be open to parents, and it could be open to students. I'm not sure that students really have a lot to offer in the development of an evaluation policy. They may be involved in the teacher evaluation, however, and the policy could provide a role for the involvement of students in teacher evaluations. We don't require it provincially, but certainly there's nothing precluding a jurisdiction from involving students, parents, community, if you like, in the evaluation of teachers.

I have mixed feelings about leaving teacher evaluation to teachers. I think, first of all, that education is too important an endeavor to lock up in a classroom, or in a teaching profession in and by itself. I don't have a great deal of difficulty in treating teaching in the same way that one would treat the medical profession, or the dental profession or any other, so long as there were appropriate means in place for dealing with incompetency, and dealing with inservice, making sure that teachers are indeed competent. I'd be open to suggestions with respect to how we might do that. Our difficulty, of course, is that in the present configuration, we have a unicameral, or a single, association, which has both professional and member welfare responsibilities. Or put differently, we've got the ATA, which is both a union and a professional association. To the extent that those two are incompatible in one association, that is, the evaluation of members renders it difficult for us to accord to the current teaching profession the same responsibility and authority as we have in those professions which have dual functions—the AMA in medicine and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. My feeling is that I would be open to suggestions, but I see no reason why we would leave the evaluation of teachers simply to teachers at this point. Our involvement of principals as the main evaluators of teachers doesn't ignore teachers, because to be a principal you have to be a teacher. To be a superintendent you have to be a teacher. Ultimately, the product is going to require, for as long as I can foresee, the continued involvement of an external evaluation criterion being applied to teaching.

Ultimately, the task of teaching the student is to induce kids to learn, that's the final product. The whole organization must ensure that kids in Alberta, regardless of where they live, learn what they need to know to be productive, successful, competent, happy members of our society. To say that isn't the teacher's responsibility is just ridiculous.

How satisfied do you think teachers, administrators, and trustees are with the evaluation policies?

CASS: I don't know. I think administrators have accepted it; it's part of the process but I'd be mistaken if I didn't say that I suspected there are still uncertainties and a lot of misgivings.

ATA: I think teachers are basically satisfied. The administrators feel, I think from what I hear, that there is downloading from central office on to them. They are being asked to do more and more and this has put a lot of pressure on them.

Trustees' Associations: The public is not satisfied with teacher evaluation. The satisfaction of administrators varies a lot and depends on the experience of the administrators. I think by now it's fair to say that most administrators are genuinely supportive of evaluation. But when you get past superintendents, associates, and assistants, I don't think that most principals feel good about evaluation, because there are not very many principals who understand the reasons for evaluation, and [have] the appropriate tools for evaluation.... Much of what principals and teachers understand about evaluation ... is basically predicated on what I would call an industrial model.... Evaluation is something that adults do to students. It is something that superordinates do to subordinates. There is very little idea that evaluation is a collegial process meant to improve the individual practitioner on the one hand, but it is also meant to improve the system on the other hand by giving valuable feedback.

CASS: I think there's still a perception by the public that there are an awful lot of inadequate teachers in our school systems that are not being dealt with. I'm not completely satisfied with the state of things, but I think we are much better at it than we used to be.

Alberta Education: I don't think teachers are very satisfied with it.... Administrators are more prone to say it's beneficial; many of them feel more comfortable about doing it now, and they probably feel that they are being more helpful to teachers than the teachers really think they are.

ATA: I think everyone's fairly satisfied with it. You have a few grumblings about it. Sometimes it's a personality thing between the teacher and the principal. I suppose the biggest grumbling that I hear in some ways is the drop-in visits. It's not that big a deal, yet if they could have been a little more prepared they might have changed some things. I don't know if that's fair one way or the other.... Another thing is that teachers tend to be aware of is that some teachers are evaluated regularly and for others the time span is greater.

Trustees' Associations: I haven't in the last while noticed a concern on the part of teachers and administrators. I think the frustration boards have is that many would like to see their teachers evaluated more often. The reality of the work load is that it's very difficult to have that happen. The unfortunate thing about parents is that they don't think about this kind of thing until they have a concern with a particular teacher or they have a failure to have a meeting of the minds about something.

ATA: I think these policies need clarification as to their purpose. People in different positions see different reasons for these policies. Many still see evaluation as a rating of performance rather than an effort to improve performance.

CASS: It's a hard one to call because it is very personality oriented. Some teachers are very satisfied with the whole experience, they see it as nonthreatening, they are comfortable with it, they don't mind speaking in front of adults [in reference to the classroom observation experience]. Someone who is in difficulty, however, has a different mindset of "you're out to get me, you're building a paper trail, no matter what you do you're going to use this against me." When a teacher receives a lot of negative statements in an evaluation, it would be natural to feel threatened. When that happens the response to the evaluation itself is secondary to a personal response of "how do I save myself?"

So until somebody comes up with a better way to provide a barrier against the slippery slope, once the teacher slips into the mindset that you're out to get them, I think you're into a whole different undertaking. The whole evaluation model is gone. And I think as long as the legislation and regulations are written as such, and the roles are determined as such, we will always experience this kind of duality in evaluation.

The moment I write, "Dear Mr. Smith, I am concerned about this, etc.," how do you respond to that letter? The defense mechanisms go up, and we start jockeying for position because we *fear*, we fear what it may lead to, and what it may lead to will be a discussion between lawyers and judges and will have very little to do with how social studies is being appropriately or inappropriately taught in 1992.

CASS: I think we are very satisfied. It's a model that is well accepted by all parties. The process provides an opportunity for appeal, and my experience tells me that we would get somewhere between one or two appeals a year, out of five or six hundred teachers.

Alberta Education: At the board and superintendent level, for the most part, I'm detecting a fair level of satisfaction. Boards feel that administration, school-based administration in particular, are more on top of it than they were years ago. Some principals accept teacher evaluation as an integral part of their responsibilities and they do a good job. Other principals, I believe, still feel it's somewhat of an imposition. For teachers, it's a mixed bag. It depends on how it is handled. The ATA does endorse it if it is done properly.

CASS: I can't really answer that other than to say that we have very few complaints about teacher evaluation policies and procedures. Complaints that I do hear, from other than teachers, is that we don't evaluate as often as we should, and we don't monitor the process often enough to determine if it is used effectively.

Exploring a Little Further

During the interviews the discussion occasionally moved to other issues pertaining to teacher evaluation. Some of the issues were brought forward by several interviewees, others by only one individual. These issues are presented in an attempt to address teacher evaluation policy and practice from a broad perspective, and to share the wisdom and insights of educators and policy makers from across the province.

The Role of Alberta Education

Alberta Education: Our role in the mid '80s was to approve each evaluation policy, and that took several years to do. Later on, about 1986 or 1987, we moved more to monitoring to assure that it was being implemented. We used to look at teacher evaluation as part of a school evaluation in that it was part of the administrative function. We are now doing more system and program evaluations and fewer school evaluations, and therefore we're paying less attention to teacher evaluation.

CASS: I don't think Alberta Education has a role to play in large urban settings. They don't have the resources; we've got more than they do. We have as much, probably more, expertise than they do, and they recognize that.

CASS: Should the Department be doing anything more? Absolutely not!

Trustees' Associations: I suppose boards would like to see or have a sense that there is general leadership in the area in terms of expectations, and in terms of competencies.

The Role of the Principal

CASS: Most teacher evaluation, performance review, is based on the assumption that the teacher is capable, and the role of the principal is to help them grow professionally.

Trustees' Associations: I believe that principals should have the leading role in the evaluation of teachers. They see them on a daily basis and in my view have a better opportunity to see all of the skills that the teacher brings to the classroom and to the school as a whole.

ATA: I don't know how comfortable principals are with evaluation. The up side of it is that the superintendent is very concerned that the principals should have their master's degrees, they should be working on it. The comments that I have heard were, you know, "I've got my master's and this principal has only a BA, how is he going to evaluate me?"

On Improving Teaching and Teacher Evaluation

CASS: I think the key is to provide an opportunity for teachers to identify for themselves what's important to them in the performance of their duties, and that's done as part of the performance review.

ATA: Something that I think is important is the evaluator should be relatively knowledgeable in the subject area. [What about training in evaluation? Do you think that makes a difference?] I think in some ways it does. I don't think it's the most important criterion, however, for them. I think if they're knowledgeable within the subject area they'll have a pretty good understanding of how and why you went about things as you did. Something else that's important as well as the subject area is experience with that age group.

I think it's very beneficial for [the evaluators] to spend a full day in the school from morning announcements right through to the buses leaving in the evening, to see how the school operates. Don't do any evaluations, just see how it operates.

CASS: We all have a key role in improving what we are doing. There needs to be more of a collaborative effort between the practices used at the universities in helping teachers develop and the evaluation of the practicums and what school systems do. We need to conduct more investigations into effective teacher evaluation. I suspect that the most successful models would be slanted toward peer-type models.

Alberta Education: We need to be a little more specific in our teaching training in terms of determining what it is that teachers should be able to do when they leave our teacher training institutes. We should have a notion of the competencies and skills that teachers should have. If we can do that, then part of the evaluation should ensure that teachers have these skills, and if they don't then we should help them develop them.

Another thing we have to do with evaluation is take some of the fear out of it. The whole purpose of evaluation is to be helpful rather than harmful. I think Plato, or some wise person, said, "To know your own soul, you must look at it in another soul." You have to have some kind of benchmark, some kind of comparison. I think it's important to look at the outcomes rather than the individual. There must be certain boundaries because we shouldn't allow certain techniques to be put in place that would be destructive to youngsters just to reach some magic output.

One of the concerns that is raised about a results-based approach is that it doesn't appear to deal with issues like self-esteem or love of learning, it doesn't deal with the "whole" child, only with things that are easy to measure. My response is to ask, "Why should I be concerned with a child's self-esteem?" and I am told that a child with high self-esteem comes to school, does well, and all of those things. It's those things that I can measure, the results of having high self-esteem and a love of learning. It is important that we have happy classrooms, and youngsters that feel that they are making progress and are cared for. These youngsters come to school and do well.

I hope we can get away from the tendency to want to measure everything that's not red hot or nailed down.

I want to look at what it is I want to improve, and leave it to the professional to determine how to get there and what strategies to use.

ATA: One of the things that I feel we have to take a serious look at, if we are going to improve instruction, is the amount of time that teachers are required to instruct.... Not only are we required to teach 1400 minutes, which I think should be 1200, we are also being asked to do "multi" other things in the school and on top of that we are supposed to take all this inservicing, whether it be on computers or whatever. So we are working 60- to 70-hour weeks and the perception out there is that teachers are overpaid and they get two months during the summer. People aren't being realistic about what is really happening and teachers are burning out.

Trustees' Associations: First of all, we have to make sure that our teachers are coming out of their training well prepared for the realities of the classroom today. I'm not sure that boards feel that is happening. I've had an opportunity over the last few years to interview candidates for the Edwin Parr Award and they have said over and over again that they weren't prepared in many areas for the realities of their classroom. One of the things that they would like to have more of is the practicum.

I believe that improving teaching is a shared responsibility between the teacher and the board. If individuals in the classroom are advised that they need to improve their teaching skills, in order for them to remain they have to take some responsibility for this and seek help. But boards also see their teachers as extremely valuable resources, and it's in their best interests to make sure that professional development is made available.

ATA: I think it is necessary to receive prompt feedback.

On Good Teaching

CASS: To me a teacher is a person who allows the students to develop their potential, sets up an environment that permits good learning to occur, causes students to really think, and is able to communicate through active discussion. That's the kind of thing I look for in an evaluation.

Alberta Education: Good teachers are well prepared; they have the capacity to work well with students and to meet their different needs. They should be adept at assessing student progress, and be able to use that information to improve instruction, and to report accurately to parents. They should have good deportment, be able to create an environment that is safe and friendly, and be businesslike and productive. They should be good role models and be highly professional. Ultimately, they must be able to achieve results. No matter how well they can present a lesson, students must be learning.

Trustees' Associations: The skills that a teacher needs are constantly changing and that's part of the difficulties we face within our jurisdictions. Teachers need to have both very specific skills and some general skills as well. For instance, teachers are dealing more and more with children who have special needs. Some of these children require very specific skills on the part of the teacher.

On Teaching and Learning

Alberta Education: Teaching and learning, I never separate the two halves. I know that teaching doesn't occur unless learning is concomitant.... My concern with some of the policies is that they are teacher-centered, they don't focus at all on the outcome of the teaching act, which should be student learning. I think any improvement that I would want to make to the existing policy would be to tie it more closely to the outcome of the teaching endeavor, which is student learning.

I wouldn't focus on examinations as being the only measure. Clearly, if the object of schooling is to teach children self-respect, enhance their self-image, then there should be a way of assessing whether teachers have enhanced the student's self-image. That's not something that I think you would write a test on. But if it's an object of teaching, then teachers should know when they've done it, and they should be able to describe when they've done it. If a teacher doesn't know when a student's self-image has been enhanced, how can the teacher be working toward enhancing it?

The teaching act should be purposeful and should be focused on outcomes. A teacher evaluation policy should focus on how well a teacher articulates the expectations and achieves the results, results in a very broad sense, not simply results on provincial achievement, or diploma examinations. But they're part of it. How well the teacher develops the individual child to the full potential of that child is ultimately the test of good teaching.

Summary and Observations

The stakeholder interviews revealed a wide array of views on the state of teacher evaluation policy and practice in Alberta. There seems to be as much disagreement as there is agreement on the issues raised during these interviews. A common belief is that we still do not know how teacher evaluation has affected teachers, teaching, and student learning. However, there is some agreement that we are paying more attention to what teachers do in the classroom. A widespread view is that more teacher evaluation is being conducted now than before the provincial policy was adopted, and that principals hold the primary role for this activity. It is also widely believed that we are doing a better job at evaluation, particularly in paying attention to legal issues and the process of natural justice. Some stakeholders, such as trustees, would like to see more teacher evaluation being done, but there is acknowledgment that teacher evaluation requires more time than most administrators are able or willing to give. A few individuals are beginning to question whether teacher evaluation as it is currently practiced is the appropriate vehicle for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Satisfaction. The level of satisfaction with teacher evaluation varies tremendously across stakeholder groups. In the perceptions of trustees, central office staff, and Alberta Education officials, satisfaction with current teacher evaluation practices increases from teachers to principals to central office administrators. Of the small number of teachers interviewed in this phase of the study, many were satisfied with teacher evaluation, although they did offer suggestions for improvement. Some teachers perceive evaluation still to be somewhat perfunctory, neither threatening nor helpful, but feedback, particularly positive feedback, is seen as desirable. The perception is that principals are growing in their comfort level with evaluation, but that the amount of time required of them to do justice to the process is an issue. Trustees and Alberta Education officials are skeptical about the degree of satisfaction that exists with teacher evaluation.

Policy Development. Teachers and principals are generally recognized as the key players in the development of teacher evaluation policies, and in the process itself. Some interest was expressed for involving parents, and to some extent students, in policy development.

Impact. Reactions are mixed regarding the impact of the provincial policy on school jurisdictions, teachers, and students. Many believe that most school jurisdictions had teacher evaluation policies in place when the provincial policy was announced, but that the provincial policy helped to emphasize the need to conduct more evaluations of teachers and the importance of providing assistance to those who were performing them. Teacher evaluation was initially perceived more as a measure of accountability than as a means to improve teaching and student learning. Some individuals believe that the provincial policy was summative in tone and intent. There is little interest among these stakeholders in having the provincial policy revised; instead, those from local jurisdictions tended to prefer the retention of control of teacher evaluation policies and practices. There is some agreement that the provincial policy's impact was to focus attention on teachers in the classroom, and that this has been positive. It is generally believed that we do not know what direct impact teacher evaluation has had on learning and student achievement. The role of principals, and how they spend their time has been affected, however.

Summative and Formative Evaluation. One of the unresolved issues regarding teacher evaluation is whether one evaluation process can be both summative and formative. Some believe that separate policies must be created to serve summative and formative purposes, and others believe that one policy can provide a process to deal both with administrative decision making about teachers and with the improvement of teacher performance. At the heart of this debate is a lack of a common understanding of what constitutes teacher evaluation.

Refinements. There is some interest in examining alternative teacher evaluation policies and practices. Some of the stakeholder representatives interviewed suggested that we need to look more closely at teaching/learning processes and connect teacher evaluation more to student outcomes. Realizing that student learning occurs through many complex and cumulative experiences, and is also a responsibility of students themselves, some interviewees suggested that teachers in a school need to be held collectively accountable for the results that students achieve. To the degree that teachers are held collectively accountable, team evaluation would seem to be a natural complement of individual teacher evaluation. These opinion leaders suggested that teachers need to be much more collegial, that they need to be given opportunities to share with each other, to visit in one another's classrooms, to provide peer coaching, and to be mentors to one another. They saw the need for teachers to be more involved in "evaluating" each other. The isolation of the classroom teacher was recognized as an impediment to professional growth.

Several other views were expressed. Among these were that if student outcomes are to be used as criteria in the evaluation of teachers, then we must broaden and improve our assessment of students. Also suggested was that teacher evaluation policies need to account for the changing role of the teacher and encourage teachers to adopt new teaching methods and approaches to learning.

An analysis of the many comments offered by these school jurisdiction administrators, department officials, and various association officials raised several interesting issues, such as the importance of conducting reviews of teacher evaluation policies, the need to clarify the conceptual nature of teacher evaluation, the need to examine teacher evaluation practices in jurisdictions and schools, and the need to clarify the roles of the many participants associated with teacher evaluation policies and practices.

Other questions and concerns were raised by the participants in this phase of the teacher evaluation study. There is need to revisit individual policies to determine how well they are accomplishing what they were intended to do, and to determine whether the initial assumptions underlying these policies are still valid and acceptable.

The questions were as follows: Can we, or should we, assume that most teachers are competent? Can we assume that most teachers want to grow professionally? Can we assume that the level of trust required for positive teacher-administrator interactions will be created in evaluation experiences? Can we assume that those conducting evaluations will have the best interests of teachers and students at heart? Can we assume that evaluators have an appreciation of the conceptual complexities of teaching and learning, of adult learning, and of individual differences? What understanding do we have of what it means to be accountable? What assumptions do we make about the role of the teacher in the learning experiences of students when we want to hold them accountable?

The representatives of the stakeholder organizations who were interviewed for this phase of the teacher evaluation study shared with the interviewers a great variety of perceptions on the state of current policies and practices associated with teacher evaluation in Alberta. Many important questions and issues were raised that should provide helpful direction for future developments on teacher evaluation in this province and elsewhere.

Chapter 5

Educators' Views on Teacher Evaluation

In this phase of the study opinions about teacher evaluation policies and practices were sought from a sample of teachers, trustees, and of school and system level administrators throughout the province. The findings of this phase provide another set of perceptions concerning the impact of Alberta's teacher evaluation policies and also provide an opportunity to triangulate these findings with those of other phases of the research.

Methodology

The research team chose to use questionnaires to obtain the opinions of teachers and administrators about the implementation of teacher evaluation policies and to survey a sample of trustees using telephone interviews. The trustees' responses are reported Chapter 6. This chapter reports the opinions of teachers and administrators.

Questionnaire Development

The first draft of the questionnaire was based on the list of topics identified during the development of the study. Questions related to each topic were developed, overlapping questions deleted, and the remainder were then organized into a logical format and piloted with members of the case study teams. From their initial responses, a second draft questionnaire with some changes in wording and different response categories was developed. Following a second round of reactions, the questions were further refined and in order to streamline the instrument, a decision was made to develop two questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for administrators.

The final questionnaire (Appendix A) had three sections. Section I contained 20 closed response questions on aspects of the teacher evaluation process, Section II contained four open-response questions including two on the strengths and weaknesses of their teacher evaluation practices, and Section III contained four questions requiring demographic information. The questions were organized in a general sequence from knowledge of the policy and its development to the specific procedures in use. The differences in the two questionnaires are minor and occur in Sections II and III where questions were adapted to be meaningful for the appropriate category of respondent.

Sample Selection

Using a random numbers table, samples of 100 urban teachers, 100 rural teachers, and 50 urban and 50 rural administrators was drawn from the provincial data base. The urban sample was selected from the city school districts. The rural sample was selected from the remaining jurisdictions. The sample was considered sufficient to provide returns that would be statistically robust should there be meaningful differences between groups. A questionnaire, a covering letter explaining the purpose of the survey and the ethical procedures employed, and a stamped return envelope were sent to each potential respondent.

Because most teacher evaluation policies require evaluations to be completed by mid-May, questionnaire distribution was delayed until this period had passed and those educators who had been involved in evaluation were free to reflect on their experiences.

Response Rate

This report is based on the 138 usable questionnaires returned by July 28, 1992. As is required by the research ethics policies of the University of Alberta, questionnaire recipients were allowed to opt out of the study. In this instance, those who chose not to participate were asked to return a blank questionnaire; 52 blank questionnaires were returned. Thus 190 (out of 300) questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 63.3%, of which 138 or 46.0% were usable.

Table 1 provides information about the subjects who returned usable questionnaires. The 138 respondents comprise 77 (55.8%) teachers, 37 (26.8%) principals and 24 (17.4%) central office administrators. Seventy (50.7%) of the subjects were from urban areas and 68 (49.3%) from rural areas. As shown in Table 1, each subgroup was represented.

Table 1
Composition of the Respondent Group

Type	*Teacher*	*Principal*	*Central Office*	*Row Total*
Urban	37	20	13	70
Rural	40	17	11	68
Total	77	37	24	138

Data Analysis

Information from the questionnaires was transferred to computer files. Percentages and percentage frequencies were obtained for each item.

The analysis of the data involved the application of analysis of variance and t-tests to ascertain differences between and among teachers, principals, and central office administrators as well as between rural and urban groups. The 0.05 level of statistical significance was used.

Findings

The data on respondents' backgrounds are followed by four major sections on policy, purposes, process, and impact.

Respondent Profile

Section III of the questionnaires sought demographic information about the respondents and their schools. All but 4% of teachers had at least four years and 27% had six or more years of university education. Over 95% of administrators had between five and eight years of university education. The respondents' length of professional experience varied between one and 40 years with 13 being the average years of experience for teachers and 25 being the average for administrators. Only six teachers were in their first two years of teaching. The majority of teachers worked in schools of 10 to 49 teachers. The number of teachers was reasonably evenly distributed across all grade levels. Of the school-based administrators, 18 worked in the K-6 area, one was in a K-12 school, five were in elementary-junior high schools, and 13 were in junior high or junior-senior high school combinations. The 24 central office administrators worked at all grade levels.

Policy Development and Implementation

Respondents were asked a series of questions in order to assess their awareness of their jurisdictional policy and its development, and to ascertain the extent of implementation of the policy. In responding, they could choose from five Likert-type response categories ranging from Very great, Great, Moderate, Slight, to No extent. A sixth category, Don't know, was also available.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which groups had input into the design of their jurisdiction's teacher evaluation process. According to the respondents, administrators, both central office (68%) and in-school (59%), were considered to be involved to a great or very great extent, and board members (25%), parents (62%), students (73%) and Alberta Education officials (23%) were involved to a slight or no extent. Over 32% of respondents did not know or did not answer the questions in relation to the board and Alberta Education, approximately 20% did not respond to the items concerning parents and students, and between 14% and 19% did not answer with reference to the central office and in school administrators.

Based on the means of the total respondent group, the ranking of responses to this question was as follows: central office administrators (1), school-based administrators (2), the school board (3), Alberta Education (4), parents (5) and students (6). There were significant differences between teachers and administrators on two of these sources of input. Central office administrators indicated that the inputs from school-based administrators and from Alberta Education were involved in the design of the teacher evaluation process to a significantly greater extent than did teachers. Principals rated the input of central office administrators significantly lower than did central office personnel.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that their jurisdiction's teacher evaluation policy had been implemented to at least a moderate extent, but only 26% of all respondents thought that the policy had been implemented to the fullest extent. However, there was a significant difference between the responses of teachers and central office administrators with 80% of these administrators compared with 58% of the teachers indicating that the extent of implementation of the policy was high.

The overall response to the question, "To what extent are teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction consistent with Alberta Education policies?" was that 62% of respondents considered their teacher evaluations to be consistent with the policies to either a very great or a great extent. However, 22% of educators did not respond to this question. Central office administrators perceived the extent of the consistency to be significantly greater than did the teachers.

Section II of the teacher questionnaire sought information about when teachers had last been evaluated and whether they had received a copy of their evaluation report. Of the teachers, 42% had been evaluated in the past two years and 75% had been evaluated in the past three years and 88% had been given a copy of their evaluation report.

Section II of the administrator questionnaire sought information as to the last time respondents had been involved in a teacher evaluation and how many evaluations they had been involved in since September 1, 1991. The data show that 71% of the administrators had been involved in a teacher evaluation in 1992 and 93% had been involved a teacher evaluation in the past two years. The mean number of evaluations since September 1, 1991 was 12.2 and the median was 8.

Purposes of the Teacher Evaluation Policy

Respondents were given a list of six possible purposes for teacher evaluation and were asked to identify the extent to which each was a purpose for their jurisdiction. They could choose from five Likert-type response categories from Very great, Great, Moderate, Slight, to No extent. A sixth category was available for those unable to answer the question.

Of the respondents, 63% perceived instructional improvement to be the purpose of teacher evaluation to a very great or great extent, while 60% perceived this to be the case with instructional accountability. Meeting Alberta Education requirements was a major purpose of evaluation for 54%, while 51% perceived this to be the case with providing motivation and reinforcement.

Only 25% felt either slightly or to no extent that collecting data for promotion and employment decisions was a purpose of evaluation, while 34% felt improving public relations was a purpose of teacher evaluation to at most only a very slight extent.

There were significant differences between teachers and administrators on three of these goals. Central office administrators scored instructional improvement significantly higher than either principals or teachers, and principals scored it significantly higher than teachers. Administrators in both groups scored the goal, providing motivation and reinforcement, significantly higher than did teachers, while central office administrators scored the goal, improving public relations, significantly higher than did either teachers or principals. There were significant differences between the rural and urban subgroups on two of these items. The urban subgroup scored the goals of instructional improvement and providing motivation and reinforcement significantly higher than did the rural subgroup.

The overall response to the following question, "To what extent are teacher evaluations used for certification decisions?" indicated that 59% felt this occurred to either a very great or a great extent.

The Teacher Evaluation Process

Responses to the questions dealing with process are reported under four subheadings: evaluator, procedures, criteria and information, and feedback and assistance.

Evaluator

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which evaluators had received special training in teacher evaluation. Although 27% of respondents perceived this to be the case to a moderate extent, 25% felt this to be true either to a great or very great extent. Thirteen teachers thought that their evaluator had not had training, and a further 34% of teachers were unable to answer the question. Central office administrators indicated that evaluators had special training in teacher evaluation to a significantly greater extent than did teachers. Although 43% of administrators thought that evaluators had received special training to either a very great or great extent, only 10% of teachers perceived this to be so.

Respondents were asked to identify the personnel who conducted evaluations. For 86%, it was principals who conducted evaluations either to a very great or great extent, while for 49% this was the case with assistant or vice-principals, and for 12%, department heads or coordinators were evaluators to a great or very great extent. In terms of the involvement of central office personnel, 49% thought that the deputy or assistant superintendent was involved in evaluations either slightly or to no extent, and 58% felt likewise about the superintendent, while 62% perceived the same regarding the involvement of consultants or other central office personnel. Conversely, 29% indicated that the deputy or assistant superintendent, and 25% indicated that the superintendent performed evaluations to a great or very great extent.

Administrators indicated that principals and superintendents were involved to a significantly greater extent than did teachers. Central office administrators indicated that superintendents were involved in evaluations and principals indicated that they performed evaluations to a significantly greater extent than teachers thought they did. The urban subgroup indicated that assistant or vice-principals were involved to a significantly higher extent than did the rural subgroup. The rural subgroup indicated that the assistant superintendent and the superintendent were involved to a significantly higher extent than did the urban subgroup.

In order to determine perceptions regarding the extent to which different personnel should be involved in teacher evaluations, respondents were asked to indicate their preferences for the involvement of various groups. Of all respondents, 88% felt either to a very great or great extent that evaluation should involve school-based administrators (principal, vice-principal, department head). Concerning the involvement of teachers, 25% thought that teachers should be involved to a moderate extent, and another 25% thought they should be involved to a great or very great extent, but 28% felt that other teachers should not be involved in evaluation. Forty-six percent of all respondents felt that personnel from central office (administrators, supervisors, coordinators, consultants, etc.) should be involved either slightly or to no extent. It should be noted here that central office administrators indicated that they should be involved to a significantly higher extent than did teachers. A large percentage of responses indicated that students (63%), parents (76%), personnel from Alberta Education (78%), and trustees (86%) should have slight or no involvement in teacher evaluation.

Principals indicated that personnel from Alberta Education should be involved to a significantly lesser extent than did teachers, that is, 92% of administrators felt that Alberta Education should be involved slightly or to no extent in teacher evaluation compared with 68% of similar teacher responses. The rural subgroup indicated that personnel from Alberta Education and central office should be involved to a higher extent than did the urban subgroup.

Procedures

The questions in this section focused on the use of pre- and postconferences, the types of information collected, and the consistent use of forms and procedures.

Asked to identify the extent to which teachers are always informed before an evaluation takes place, 74% of all respondents indicated that this occurred either to a very great or a great extent. The principals perceived that the extent was significantly greater than did the teachers. Of the administrators, 82% felt this was the case to a great or very great extent, while 68% of the teachers felt likewise.

Just over half (54%) of all respondents thought that preevaluation conferences between teachers and evaluators occurred either to a very great or a great extent. The administrators perceived that the extent was significantly greater than did the teachers. Although 69% of administrators rated preconferences as happening to a great or very great extent, this is true for only 43% of teachers.

Similarly, almost 79% of respondents thought that postevaluation conferences happened to a very great or a great extent. The administrators perceived that the extent was significantly greater than did the teachers. Ninety percent of administrators rated postconferences as occurring to a great or very great extent, a view shared by only 70% of teachers.

Respondents were asked to identify the extent to which various information was gathered for teacher evaluations. Eighty-nine percent responded that, either to a very great or great extent, evaluators were involved in classroom observation, and 56% felt likewise about the evaluators' involvement in reviewing lesson plans. Although 39% of respondents felt that evaluators were involved in seeking information from the teacher's superordinates to a moderate or great extent, 41% felt this was true only to a slight extent or to no extent. Sixty-four percent saw slight or no involvement in seeking information from the teacher's colleagues, while 74% indicated the same lack of involvement in testing students.

Both groups of administrators indicated that classroom observation occurred to a significantly greater extent than did teachers, and central office administrators indicated that reviewing lesson plans occurred to a significantly greater extent than either teachers or principals. Rural educators indicated that reviewing lesson plans was used to a significantly higher extent than did urban educators.

In response to a question concerning the extent to which consistent procedures and forms were used in teacher evaluations, approximately 63% of the respondents indicated that, to a great or very great extent, consistent procedures and forms were used in teacher evaluations.

Criteria and Information

Two questions were posed about the criteria used in teacher evaluation. One listed a series of common items and asked the extent to which educators perceived that they were used, while the other asked respondents to indicate the extent to which written criteria concerning five items were part of their evaluations.

First, educators were asked to rate the extent to which each of 14 criteria were used in their evaluations. Responses to each item were ranked according to the means of the five-point scale. The ranking of the criteria was as follows: the overall classroom performance of the teacher (1), the planning and preparation of the teacher (2), the teaching methods employed by the teacher (3), the rapport of the teacher with students (4), behavior of the students (5.5), the rapport of the teacher with colleagues (5.5), all-round development of the students (8), the personality of the teacher (8), the rapport of the teacher with superordinates (8), the teaching experience of the teacher (10), examination results of the students (11.5), the use of audiovisual aids by the teacher (11.5), the appearance of the teacher (13), and the university education of the teacher (14).

There were significant differences between teachers and administrators on five of the items of this question. Teachers perceived that the personality of the teacher and the teachers' rapport with superordinates were used to a significantly greater extent than did principals. Central office administrators indicated that two criteria, the rapport of the teacher with students and the planning and preparation of the teacher, were used to a significantly greater extent than did teachers, and the use of the criterion, overall classroom performance of the teacher, was rated used to a significantly greater extent by central office administrators than by teachers or principals.

There were significant differences between rural and urban subgroups on three of the items in this question. The rural subgroup perceived that the appearance of the teacher was used to a significantly greater extent than did the urban subgroup. The urban subgroup perceived that the rapport of the teacher with colleagues and the rapport of the teacher with students were used to a significantly greater extent than did the rural subgroup.

The second question was intended to determine the perceptions of respondents concerning the extent to which written criteria were involved in teacher evaluations.

When the responses of all respondents were ranked according to the means, the extent of use of written criteria for the selected items was as follows: teacher behavior (1), lesson planning (2), teacher professional development (3), student performance (4), and testing or other student evaluation (5). The urban subgroup indicated that teacher evaluation involved written criteria for teacher professional development to a significantly higher extents than did the rural subgroup.

Feedback and Assistance

Two items were included in this section. One was concerned with appeal procedures and the other with appropriate assistance.

Just over half (52%) of the respondents indicated that appeal procedures were available in the case of a negative teacher evaluation to a great or very great extent. Central office administrators perceived that these procedures were available to a significantly greater extent than did teachers. Seventy-seven percent of administrators felt this was the case, while only 33% of the teachers felt likewise.

Similarly, 50% of the respondents indicated that, to a great or very great extent, follow-up assistance was provided to resolve identified teaching problems or concerns. For both groups of administrators (71%), the extent to which the assistance was provided was significantly greater than it was perceived to be by the teachers (34%).

Impact of the Teacher Evaluation Policy

Respondents were asked to describe the extent of the fairness of teacher evaluation decisions, to assess the positive impact of teacher evaluation, and to describe the extent of dissatisfaction with teacher evaluation by various groups.

Asked to identify the extent to which teacher evaluations decisions are fair and just, 58% of the respondents perceived this to be the case to a great extent or very great extent. Administrators (77%) perceived this to be the case to a significantly greater extent than did teachers (43%).

Respondents were given a list of seven items and asked to assess the extent to which teacher evaluation had had a positive impact on each one. For three items, quality of instruction, quality of instructional supervision, and teacher professional development, teacher evaluation was assessed as having a positive impact to at least a moderate extent by over 65% of the respondents, and for over 36% of respondents, the quality of instruction and the quality of instructional supervision were rated as influenced positively to a great or very great extent. Between 38% and 46% of respondents rated the remaining four items, personnel selection decisions, staff relations, student achievement, and development of improved measures for teacher performance, as having been influenced positively to a moderate or great extent by the teacher evaluation process. For two items, personnel selection decisions and student achievement, 21% and 17% of respondents indicated that they did not know what to respond. There were significant differences between teachers and central office administrators on four of these items and between administrators and teachers on two other items. Administrators perceived the impact of teacher evaluation on the quality of instruction and on teacher professional development, and central office administrators perceived the impact on the quality of instructional supervision, improved measures of teacher performance, and staff relations to be significantly higher than did teachers. There were significant differences between the urban and rural subgroups on two of these items. The urban subgroup rated the impact of teacher evaluation on teacher professional development and staff relations higher than did the rural subgroup.

In order to assess the extent dissatisfaction has with the teacher evaluation process, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which dissatisfaction has been expressed by various groups. In general, the following percentages of educators indicated that expressions of dissatisfaction had been expressed to a slight or to no extent from the school board (38%), central office administrators (41%), parents (44%), school-based administrators (47%), students (47%), and teachers (50%). Over half the respondents checked Don't Know concerning the school board, parents, and students, 46% indicated Don't Know concerning central office administrators, and 28% checked the same response for school-based administrators. Of the respondents, teachers indicated that dissatisfaction was expressed by teachers to a significantly greater extent than did either group of administrators.

Discussion

Despite the low response rate, which limits the generalizability of the results, there were few surprises among the findings of this section of the study. The teachers and administrators who responded to the questionnaire reacted as would be expected in relation to teacher evaluation policies that were operating in a reasonable way. The differences in views between teachers and administrators are explainable in terms of their differences in perspectives. The differences between rural and urban subgroups are sometimes explainable in terms of their different contexts but some differences defy easy explanation.

School boards, both rural and urban, have implemented teacher evaluation policies aimed primarily at improving instruction and instructional accountability.

A minority of respondents was not really sure who had been involved in the process, and of the groups, teachers were the least certain that the policy had been fully implemented. Although evaluators have not received much special training, evaluations are perceived as fair and just. School-based administrators had the most input into the design of evaluation processes. Teacher evaluations have had the most impact upon the quality of instructional supervision as well as on teacher professional development and the quality of instruction. Jurisdictional teacher evaluation policies are consistent with Alberta Education policies.

Although teachers are usually informed before an evaluation takes place, they are only involved in a preevaluation conference and provided with follow-up assistance to resolve problems to a moderate extent. However, postevaluation conferences tend to be common practice. Certification decisions are almost always based on information from evaluations. Teacher evaluations are strongly based on teacher performance, planning, and preparation and involve classroom observation and reviewing lesson plans. Dissatisfaction with evaluations was most often expressed by teachers and school-based administrators. Evaluations are usually conducted by principals, vice-principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents and these are seen as the people who should conduct the evaluations. Written criteria are most often provided for teacher behavior and lesson planning. Consistent procedures and forms are generally used.

Administrators view teacher evaluations more positively than do teachers. This positive view can be seen in their rating of instructional improvement as a goal, their rating of the availability of appeal procedures, the extent to which they perceive that evaluators have special training, the justice of their evaluations, their input into the evaluation procedures, the impact of evaluation, the consistency between their teacher evaluation policies and the policies of Alberta Education, their estimate of the availability of follow-up assistance, their estimate of the availability of preevaluation and postevaluation information and conferences, their ranking of the importance of teacher preparation and rapport with the students and the unimportance of teacher personality, their ranking of classroom observation as a source of information for evaluations, and their perceptions of a lack of dissatisfaction with teacher evaluations. They signaled their views of the importance of teacher evaluation by indicating that principals and superintendents are frequently involved in teacher evaluations and that this is what they prefer. It seems entirely reasonable that because administrators are doing the evaluations and teachers are being evaluated, the former group should see evaluations in a more positive light than the latter.

The significant differences between rural and urban subgroups on a number of questions are not always easy to explain. Although some of these differences can be attributed to the differences in the size of the jurisdictions, other more subtle differences in context are also involved. The fact that rural jurisdictions are larger in geographic area than urban jurisdictions probably accounts for the differences between the two subgroups on the items related to who does the evaluations and who should do the evaluations. In the rural jurisdictions, superintendents, assistant superintendents and other central office personnel are involved in evaluations. In the larger, urban jurisdictions evaluations are performed by school-based personnel. These differences may also explain why the two groups differed on their ratings of reviewing lesson plans as a way of obtaining information to evaluate a teacher and on the lesser importance of written criteria on professional development. However, it is difficult to explain the differences between the two subgroups on such items as the goals of instructional improvement and providing motivation, the impact of evaluation on teacher professional development and staff relations, and the importance of the appearance of the teacher, the rapport of the teacher with colleagues, and the rapport of the teacher with students as bases for evaluation.

Appendix A

Teacher Evaluation Policy Impact Study

Frequencies
(Percent)

SECTION I

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
1. To what extent has the formal teacher evaluation policy of your jurisdiction been implemented in the schools in your jurisdiction?	36 (26.1)	58 (42.0)	26 (18.8)	6 (4.3)	1 (0.7)	11 (7.9)
2. To what extent does teacher evaluation in the schools in your jurisdiction have the following purpose(s) or goal(s)?						
a) instructional accountability	25 (18.1)	58 (42.0)	32 (23.2)	11 (8.0)	5 (3.6)	7 (5.0)
b) instructional improvement	26 (18.8)	61 (44.2)	31 (22.5)	9 (6.5)	6 (4.3)	5 (3.6)
c) meeting Alberta Education requirements	22 (15.9)	53 (38.4)	40 (29.0)	9 (6.5)	4 (2.9)	10 (7.2)
d) providing motivation and reinforcement	21 (15.2)	50 (36.2)	38 (27.5)	16 (11.6)	6 (4.3)	7 (5.0)
e) collecting data for promotion and employment decisions	13 (9.4)	27 (19.6)	42 (30.4)	21 (15.2)	14 (10.1)	21 (15.2)
f) improving public relations	7 (5.1)	23 (16.7)	39 (28.3)	25 (18.5)	22 15.9)	22 (15.9)
g) other (please state) ______________	4 (2.9)	3 (2.2)	1 (0.7)			130 (92.0)
3. To what extent are appeal procedures available in the case of a negative teacher evaluation?	24 (17.4)	48 (34.8)	28 (20.3)	7 (5.1)	1 (0.7)	30 (21.7)
4. To what extent have evaluators received special training in teacher evaluation?	9 (6.5)	25 (18.1)	37 (26.8)	16 (11.6)	13 (9.4)	38 (27.5)

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
5. To what extent do you feel that teacher evaluation decisions are fair and just?	17 (12.3)	63 (45.7)	40 (29.0)	10 (7.2)	3 (2.2)	5 (3.6)
6. To what extent was the teacher evaluation process designed with input from each of the following:						
a) the school board	12 (8.7)	23 (16.7)	23 (16.7)	22 (15.9)	13 (9.4)	45 (32.6)
b) central office administrators	51 (37.0)	43 (31.2)	10 (7.2)	4 (2.9)	3 (2.2)	27 (19.5)
c) school-based administrators	28 (20.3)	53 (38.4)	28 (20.3)	6 (4.3)	3 (2.2)	20 (14.5)
d) parents	1 (0.7)	4 (2.9)	15 (10.9)	30 (21.7)	56 (40.6)	32 (23.2)
e) students	1 (0.7)	3 (2.2)	6 (4.3)	27 (19.6)	74 (53.6)	28 (20.3)
f) Alberta Education	3 (2.2)	18 (13.0)	35 (25.4)	17 (12.3)	15 (10.9)	50 (36.2)
7. To what extent has teacher evaluation had a positive impact upon each of the following:						
a) quality of instruction	9 (6.5)	41 (29.7)	51 (37.0)	18 (13.0)	13 (9.4)	15 (10.8)
b) quality of instructional supervision	8 (5.8)	50 (36.2)	39 (28.3)	18 (13.0)	13 (9.4)	10 (7.2)
c) personnel selection decisions	16 (8.0)	30 (13.8)	33 (23.9)	19 (13.8)	11 (8.0)	29 (21.0)
d) teacher professional development	8 (5.8)	30 (21.7)	52 (37.7)	23 (16.7)	17 (12.3)	8 (5.8)
e) staff relations	7 (5.1)	23 (16.7)	41 (29.7)	25 (18.1)	29 (21.0)	13 (9.4)
f) student achievement	5 (3.6)	23 (16.7)	36 (26.5)	29 (21.0)	21 (15.2)	24 (17.4)

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
g) development of improved measures of teacher performance	12 (8.7)	33 (23.9)	34 (24.6)	30 (21.7)	11 (8.0)	18 (13.0)
8. To what extent are teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction consistent with Alberta Education policies?	34 (24.6)	52 (37.7)	18 (13.0)	3 (2.2)		31 (22.4)
9. To what extent is follow-up assistance provided to resolve identified teaching problems or concerns?	17 (12.3)	52 (37.7)	28 (20.3)	16 (11.6)	5 (3.6)	20 (14.5)
10. To what extent are teachers always informed before an evaluation takes place?	56 (40.6)	46 (33.3)	18 (13.0)	11 (8.0)	3 (2.2)	4 (2.9)
11. To what extent are teachers and evaluators involved in a pre-evaluation conference?	32 (23.2)	43 (31.2)	28 (20.3)	15 (10.9)	16 (11.6)	4 (2.9)
12. To what extent are teachers and evaluators involved in a post-evaluation conference?	54 (39.1)	55 (39.9)	11 (8.0)	9 (6.5)	5 (3.6)	4 (2.9)
13. To what extent are teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction used for certification decisions?	36 (26.1)	45 (32.6)	16 (11.6)	6 (4.3)	5 (3.6)	30 (21.7)
14. To what extent are teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction based upon each of the following?						
a) all-round development of the students	9 (6.5)	33 (23.9)	46 (33.3)	21 (15.2)	16 (11.6)	13 (9.4)
b) behavior of the students	7 (5.1)	42 (30.4)	44 (31.9)	26 (18.8)	11 (8.0)	8 (5.7)
c) examination results of the students	9 (6.5)	17 (12.3)	36 (26.1)	41 (29.7)	25 (18.1)	10 (7.2)
d) the university education of the teacher	2 (1.4)	8 (5.8)	24 (17.4)	31 (22.5)	45 (32.6)	28 (20.2)
e) the teaching experience of the teacher	5 (3.6)	24 (17.4)	41 (29.7)	29 (21.0)	24 (17.4)	15 (10.8)
f) the appearance of the teacher	1 (0.7)	14 (10.1)	37 (26.8)	44 (31.9)	23 (16.7)	19 (13.8)

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
g) the personality of the teacher	12 (8.7)	28 (20.3)	42 (30.4)	23 (16.7)	14 (10.1)	19 (13.8)
h) the rapport of the teacher with superordinates	7 (5.1)	41 (29.7)	40 (29.0)	23 (16.7)	13 (9.4)	14 (10.2)
i) the rapport of the teacher with colleagues	9 (6.5)	36 (26.1)	50 (36.2)	22 (15.9)	11 (8.0)	10 (7.2)
j) the rapport of the teacher with students	35 (25.4)	62 (44.9)	26 (18.8)	8 (5.8)	2 (1.4)	5 (3.6)
k) the planning and preparation of the teacher	45 (32.6)	64 (46.4)	17 (12.3)	4 (2.9)	3 (2.2)	5 (3.6)
l) the use of audio-visual aids by the teacher	3 (2.2)	13 (9.4)	54 (39.1)	40 (29.0)	17 (12.3)	14 (10.2)
m) the teaching methods employed by the teacher	41 (29.7)	67 (48.6)	16 (11.6)	5 (3.6)	3 (2.2)	6 (4.4)
n) the overall classroom performance of the teacher	60 (43.5)	58 (42.0)	11 (8.0)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	6 (4.3)

15. To what extent do teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction involve the evaluator in each of the following?

a) classroom observation	84 (60.9)	39 (28.3)	7 (5.1)	4 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	3 (2.1)
b) testing students	1 (0.7)	5 (3.6)	23 (16.7)	28 (20.3)	74 (53.6)	7 (5.2)
c) reviewing lesson plans	24 (17.4)	54 (39.1)	30 (21.7)	20 (14.5)	8 (5.8)	2 (1.4)
d) seeking information from the teacher's superordinates	6 (4.3)	24 (17.4)	30 (21.7)	21 (15.2)	36 (26.1)	21 (15.2)
e) seeking information from the teacher's colleagues	5 (3.6)	7 (5.1)	18 (13.0)	23 (16.7)	65 (47.1)	20 (14.5)

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
16. To what extent has **dissatisfaction** with the teacher evaluation process been expressed by each of the following?						
a) the school board	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	6 (4.3)	21 (15.2)	32 (23.2)	77 (55.8)
b) central office administrators		5 (3.6)	12 (8.7)	27 (19.6)	29 (21.0)	65 (47.3)
c) school-based administrators	2 (1.4)	9 (6.5)	25 (18.1)	34 (24.6)	29 (21.0)	39 (28.3)
d) teachers	6 (4.3)	21 (15.2)	29 (21.0)	45 (32.6)	24 (17.4)	13 (9.4)
e) parents		3 (2.2)	4 (2.9)	20 (14.5)	41 (29.7)	70 (50.7)
f) students		1 (0.7)	3 (2.2)	14 (10.1)	51 (37.0)	69 (50.0)
17. To what extent are teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction performed by each of the following?						
a) department heads or coordinators	8 (5.8)	8 (5.8)	10 (7.2)	16 (11.6)	78 (56.5)	18 (13.1)
b) assistant or vice-principals	35 (25.4)	33 (23.9)	18 (13.0)	23 (16.7)	22 (15.9)	7 (5.1)
c) principals	87 (63.0)	32 (23.2)	9 (6.5)	3 (2.2)	3 (2.2)	4 (2.9)
d) consultants or other such central office personnel	7 (5.1)	10 (7.2)	16 (11.6)	27 (19.6)	58 (42.0)	20 (14.5)
e) the deputy or assistant superintendent	22 (15.9)	18 (13.0)	13 (9.4)	22 (15.9)	46 (33.3)	17 (12.3)
f) the superintendent	21 (15.2)	13 (9.4)	13 (9.4)	17 (12.3)	63 (45.7)	11 (7.9)

18. To what extent do teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction involve **written criteria** for each of the following?

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
a) lesson planning	30 (21.7)	40 (29.0)	29 (21.0)	22 (15.9)	12 (8.7)	5 (3.6)
b) student performance	11 (8.0)	31 (22.5)	36 (26.1)	25 (18.1)	29 (21.0)	6 (4.3)
c) testing or other student evaluation	8 (5.8)	22 (15.9)	35 (25.4)	31 (22.5)	36 (26.1)	6 (4.3)
d) teacher behavior	23 (16.7)	57 (41.3)	18 (13.0)	18 (13.0)	12 (8.7)	10 (7.2)
e) teacher professional development	10 (7.2)	35 (25.4)	45 (32.6)	22 (15.9)	19 (13.8)	7 (5.1)

19. To what extent do evaluators use each of the following during the process of teacher evaluation in the schools in your jurisdiction?

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
a) a consistent set of procedures	33 (23.9)	56 (40.6)	24 (17.4)	12 (8.7)	7 (5.1)	6 (4.3)
b) a consistent set of forms	45 (32.6)	41 (29.7)	27 (19.6)	7 (5.1)	14 (10.1)	4 (2.9)

20. To what extent do you feel that teacher evaluations in the schools in your jurisdiction **should involve** each of the following?

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
a) personnel from Alberta Education	1 (0.7)	7 (5.1)	18 (13.0)	24 (17.4)	84 (60.9)	4 (2.8)
b) personnel (administrators, supervisors, coordinators, consultants, etc) from central office	8 (5.8)	32 (23.2)	30 (21.7)	33 (23.9)	30 (21.7)	5 (3.6)
c) personnel (principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, department heads, etc.) from the school	78 (56.5)	43 (31.2)	10 (7.2)	2 (1.4)	3 (2.2)	2 (1.4)

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Slight Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/ No Response
d) other teachers	11 (8.0)	23 (16.7)	35 (25.4)	26 (18.8)	39 (28.3)	4 (2.9)
e) students	5 (3.6)	10 (7.2)	32 (23.2)	44 (31.9)	43 (31.2)	4 (2.8)
f) parents	2 (1.4)	3 (2.2)	22 (15.9)	43 (31.2)	62 (44.9)	6 (4.3)
g) trustees		1 (0.7)	11 (8.0)	21 (15.2)	98 (71.0)	7 (5.0)

Chapter 6

Trustees' Perspectives on Teacher Evaluation Policies and Practices

Boards of school trustees have the responsibility for developing policy in each school division, district, and county in Alberta. Although others are typically involved in the process of policy formulation, boards of trustees have the final responsibility in their local jurisdictions for sanctioning policy. In this study of the impact of teacher evaluation policies, it was therefore important that the perceptions of trustees be represented. The purpose of this phase of the Teacher Evaluation Policy Impact study was to determine what a sample of school trustees thought about teacher evaluation in general and as it was currently practiced in their jurisdictions.

In this chapter first the methodology used in this phase of the study is described, then the findings are presented. Finally, a few observations are offered.

Methodology

Although questionnaires were designed to obtain the opinions of school and system educators, telephone interviews were used to gather the perceptions of trustees for a number of reasons:

1. this method was seen as providing respondents with a reasonable opportunity to share their thoughts on the topic within a semistructured framework;
2. the interviewer could seek clarification on an issue if needed;
3. the response rate would be high;
4. the data could be collected efficiently; and
5. the method was quite cost-effective.

An interview guide was developed containing questions about impact, refinements to policy, what processes should be used to evaluate teachers, who should be involved in determining the processes to be used, and how satisfied the trustees were with current policy and practice. Some of the questions were like those asked in the questionnaire study of teachers, principals, and central office administrators as reported in Chapter 5, whereas others were similar to those asked of other educational stakeholders as reported in Chapter 4.

A stratified random sample of trustees was selected from a list of board chairpersons. Chairpersons were chosen as they are often the spokespersons for their boards, they usually have more experience as school trustee, and a list of chairpersons was available. The chairpersons to be interviewed were selected, using a table of random numbers, in each of the following groups: school districts, divisions, counties, Roman Catholic separate school jurisdictions, and other (consolidated, RC public, regional, and Protestant separate). An attempt was also made to ensure that there was representation from urban, rural, and "suburban" boards. In all, 25 interviews were conducted by two interviewers during a five-day period in mid-July.

Telephone calls were made to the prospective interviewees, and with the respondents' permission the interviews were tape-recorded for later transcription. A few of the interviews were brief. Not all of the trustees felt comfortable talking about their jurisdiction's teacher evaluation policy or teacher evaluation in general. Most of the trustees, however, appeared to be well informed about the teacher evaluation policy and practices in their jurisdiction, and about teacher evaluation generally.

The interview transcripts were coded and analyzed for themes and subthemes independently by two members of the research team. The two coding systems developed were quite similar, so it was easy to combine the two analyses. The information collected in the interviews is presented under several topic headings and then summarized within three major themes.

Interview Findings

The information collected in the interviews is discussed under six main topics as follows:

Knowledge of Policy

Most of these trustees had a general knowledge of their jurisdiction's teacher evaluation policy and had formed impressions about the impact or effects this policy was having on teachers and the school system as a whole. A few were cautious about describing the effects of the policy. The trustees knew who was conducting the evaluations and how often evaluations were undertaken. A few trustees were able to describe the process in some detail. Several indicated that the policy had been revised in the last few years.

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Although there was a variety of opinions about the purpose of evaluation, many trustees suggested that their policy was intended to help teachers improve. Teacher evaluation was seen as spurring teachers to "sharpen up a bit," as helping the Board to "tell how to help the teachers help the kids," "mainly geared to help the teacher do a better job of teaching," and as "a valuable tool for improving professional development." One of these chairpersons suggested that evaluation serves two purposes: "It gives them some feedback into what

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they are doing right and to straighten them out if they are going astray." In a similar vein, this comment was made:

> It helps some teachers. Some teachers think they are being picked on or singled out. As far as the board is concerned, we are trying to get the best education for your children and we want the best teachers around to do it.

One respondent remarked that evaluation should not be used to evaluate something that is already known not to work. "We should be working on getting it fixed." Teacher evaluation was seen as closely linked to professional development: "What is going on in our jurisdiction is that through evaluation we are in turn determining what some of our professional development needs are." Another respondent stated:

> Professional development goes hand-in-hand with evaluations. We have more requests for teachers to go to courses that relate to their subject area. As a result of evaluations we developed a professional development policy and allotted so much money per teacher per year to help them.

Evaluation was seen to have a summative side as well by many of these trustees. One trustee commented: "It serves ... to monitor the relative competence of teachers in your jurisdiction." Another trustee described the process used in the jurisdiction as both formative and summative, and stated that "this current board is most concerned about accountability." Several trustees saw evaluation as a means, not necessarily an effective one, to eliminate poor teaching or remove incompetent teachers. "We can find incompetency quicker, we have avenues to improve that. We feel more confident now that we could do away with incompetency. I think it is working towards that. It helps us toward having competent staff."

There was a perception among some trustees that evaluation reports were almost always positive, and that administrators were afraid to say anything negative. Illustrative comments were,

> Show me a teacher who has the courage to say that they are a bad teacher. They never have enough guts to write down the problems.
>
> We want a principal to fire a teacher now and they say there is no documentation and that is their fault because they are afraid to do that.
>
> There is very little negative comment in the evaluation of teachers at any time. It is all positive stuff. I don't know if that is the best way to evaluate them.
>
> Principals hate to give a bad evaluation because they have to work with that person every day.
>
> Principals are reluctant to participate in evaluations where there may be anything of a disciplinary nature.

A few trustees expressed frustration with the process of dismissing an incompetent teacher: "If we have teachers who are not performing up to standards it is damn near impossible for us to get rid of them," and "It doesn't really matter what a school district does, once [teachers] have tenure, they are there forever."

Impact

Trustees had difficulty describing impacts of the teacher evaluation policy, but they did share some impressions. One trustee suggested that evaluation has had a lot of impact and it is "all for the better." "The impact that I have found is that it keeps our staff current," offered another trustee. Evaluation is believed to be closely linked with professional development: "through evaluation we are in turn determining what some of our professional development needs are." A fourth remarked that the principal was now spending more time in classrooms and that "would have to have a positive impact on the children." Several trustees expressed the belief that some teachers have improved in their performance as a result of the teacher evaluation policy, or at the very least teachers are getting help if they need it. An illustrative comment was,

> I know that in the past there have been teachers who have been questionable in their ability to instruct and that through the efforts of the superintendent, and the ongoing evaluation and working with that teacher, there have been enough strides made that we have kept that teacher in the classroom rather than let them go or suggest they do something else.

One trustee stated: "In discussions with senior administration and even with principals, my feedback has been positive. It has been their opinion that it is not window dressing, that it has had a positive effect in the classroom and on the competence of the teachers."

Others appear to share the belief that evaluation has not made a difference: "I don't really think the evaluations do anything." "There has been no impact." Some of the trustees interviewed indicated that evaluation had not had an impact on dismissing teachers who are incompetent.

Policy Development

There was broad agreement that teachers are, and should be, involved in the development of teacher evaluation policies. In many cases policy reviews occur on a regular basis, and a committee of trustees, central office and school level administrators, and teacher representatives provide recommendations for revisions. In a few cases school jurisdictions hired external consultants to review their policies. Evaluation of policy efficacy—was the policy doing what it was intended to do—was not mentioned as a part of the policy review. Several trustees suggested that parents and students, to some extent, should be involved in the process. There were mixed reactions about involving parents and students in the process; some trustees felt they should not be included. One trustee provided the opinion that anyone who is affected by a policy should have input during the development stage, but it is the board that has the final say.

The Policy and the Process

The teacher evaluation policies and practices described by the trustees had many similarities. The criteria for evaluation, where these were known by our respondents, generally dealt with the delivery of instruction, that is, teaching behavior in the classroom: "the delivery of the curriculum and how effectively they deliver it." Our interviewees indicated that in most cases the evaluator would meet and discuss the evaluation process with the teacher before visiting the classroom.

Reactions were mixed about the use of student achievement data as a teacher evaluation criterion. These ranged from "student achievement has not been emphasized enough," to "student achievement should not be a big part of the evaluation." There was some support for the use of student opinions, particularly at the high school level: "In education, the direct consumers, the students, are never asked for any input." As one trustee put it, it is the students who "really know what's going on in the classroom." However, teachers are perceived by some trustees as being very threatened by student input. In at least one of the jurisdictions sampled for this phase of the study the board uses a "very detailed questionnaire which [is sent] to parents and students." The trustee from this jurisdiction commented:

> We don't ask specific questions about the teacher but we certainly do as to how the child is learning, how they are enjoying school, how they feel in the classroom and so on. It does reflect on the teacher. We always leave lots of space for comments.

Although feedback from parents and students, in the form of questionnaire responses or just comments made to the principal, is acknowledged as valuable information and provides parents with a sense that they do have input, one trustee cautioned that parents should not be involved in the "formal" process of teacher evaluation. This trustee reported that formal teacher evaluation "should be left up to the professionals."

A trustee suggested that the teacher's attitude about his or her position and how the teacher gets along with her or his peers at work should be considered. Also mentioned was that one of the indicators of a good teacher is "how much of themselves the teachers put into the job. Some teachers love their job and get a great deal of job satisfaction and others are really not happy in their work and complain about how hard done by they are."

Another trustee noted that the efforts teachers make to continually upgrade themselves should be taken into consideration when teachers are evaluated. In contrast to these positions, one of the trustees interviewed commented: "I think that we should start with end results and work our way back. I am not satisfied with the highly qualitative, attitudinal evaluations that are done." According to the trustees interviewed, evaluations are almost always conducted by the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and/or the principal. Trustees reported that the superintendent generally has responsibility for evaluating teachers in their first or second year who are seeking permanent certification and that principals conduct most of the evaluations of permanent staff. Some trustees indicated that the superintendent or assistant superintendent conduct teacher evaluations on a rotational basis. The once or twice a year visit by the superintendent was not considered particularly effective. "The evaluation should come from the people who know the teachers best, and that has to be the administrators from within the school and perhaps fellow teachers as well." One trustee suggested that there should be more peer evaluation.

Having teacher evaluations conducted by external evaluators was not generally well received by trustees. They mentioned cost as a factor militating against this practice. Another was trust: "there would be a lot of suspicion." One trustee suggested that an external evaluator might have a difficult time gathering sufficient information and making appropriate recommendations: "I don't see them as being beneficial." On the other hand, a few trustees believed that an external evaluator might be more objective, particularly in jurisdictions where "people stay for a long time." A suggestion was made that external evaluators would be more useful in training district personnel or in reviewing the district evaluation policy.

From the trustees' responses it would appear that most districts are using similar processes to evaluate teachers; however, there are a few exceptions. One trustee reported the use of a procedure entitled the "Behavior Description Interview." According to this trustee, "teachers can describe what they actually are doing and have done. Also, the evaluator will describe what is actually done and evaluate that." One trustee suggested that she would like to see an "exit questionnaire" for students leaving the system or on graduation. This would help the system "pinpoint some of the problems." Some school systems are already using questionnaires with parents and students to gather information.

Satisfaction and Suggestions for Improvement

In general, trustees were satisfied with their jurisdictions' evaluation policies and with how evaluations were being conducted. As one trustee explained, "Everything has flaws and positives. In our system, I think it is working the best it can.... I am pretty satisfied with the policy, I can't complain." Another commented: "I'm satisfied with the policy. I feel it could be upgraded. Every year we can upgrade something, including the evaluation process." A third stated, "So far we have been really satisfied with the policy. I don't know what we would want to do to refine it other than perhaps involve parents in the development of the policy."

Not all trustees were satisfied, however. One indicated,

> I think the evaluation system is tremendously weak. Maybe I am a bit sour because we have just gone through a strike here. I have a problem at times with teachers' concerns for their kids. Maybe my views are somewhat jaded, but not totally.

Another trustee explained: "I am satisfied with parts of the policy. The evaluation has shown us that there are some members who are not doing their job. Our problem is what happens after that."

Whether trustees were or were not satisfied with existing policy and practice, they had many ideas for improving teacher evaluation. For some, there were only minor refinements to be made. A few trustees suggested that the evaluations should not be announced ahead of the visit, that there should be more drop-in visits. Several trustees would like more frequent evaluations, but some recognized that they did not have sufficient personnel for this to happen. One trustee reported that evaluations were not being done as frequently as the policy indicated they should be, which was once every three years. Another issue was raised by a trustee who expressed disagreement with his board's policy that teacher evaluation reports could only be viewed by trustees if they had a compelling reason. One trustee suggested that more people should be involved in the evaluations, that a committee should be set up, and that "full evaluations" should be conducted of a portion of the staff every year.

Among other views expressed was that of a trustee who explained that teachers should not be blamed for the students who are not successful. He suggested that the problems were "system" problems. On a "macro scale" he believed the Department was looking in the right direction at results. On a "micro level" more needed to be done to ensure that students with difficulties were identified as early as possible and not allowed to progress to the point that their problems became compounded. He remarked:

> I believe we should be more systematic in our approach. Our approach should not be one of just reacting when we go once a year into a classroom and do an evaluation. We have to be more proactive than reactive. We have to develop a system. Until we do that we are not doing the greatest job.

Others suggested that evaluation reports should include more "areas for improvement," and not be so completely positive all the time. There was a widespread perception that the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), the "union," was much too powerful, and that it protected incompetent teachers. Trustees were not so much dissatisfied with teacher evaluation as they were with the process they would have to use to dismiss an incompetent teacher. One of the respondents commented, "We feel that as a Board there is not much we can do about a teacher who has a permanent certificate and is not performing. We would like to see changes made in this area." Some of these trustees blamed the ATA. In the words of one, "I am really frustrated by the role of the ATA." Other trustees blamed the principals, as ATA members, for not being willing to criticize fellow teachers. In their words, "Principals should have some authority, some accountability to the Board to be able to discipline or supervise teachers effectively," "The trouble we are having is that if the principals get a complaint they don't follow it through," and "I think the teachers have total control now.... The principal is a member of the ATA and he is just evaluating his subordinates. I am not sure that this is fair." In offering a solution, some trustees suggested that the ATA should split into two separate organizations, one responsible for teacher welfare and the other for professional development.

Discussion

Our review of the various comments and opinions expressed by trustees led to the identification of several issues worthy of further examination and comment. One of these concerns is the policy making role of school boards and the nature of policy development. Another relates to the summative and formative nature of teacher evaluations. The third issue pertains to the purpose of teacher evaluation and its place in the governance of schools.

Trustees and Policy Development

Every school jurisdiction in the province develops its education policies in its own way. In some systems policies are developed by central office staff and then reviewed for adoption by the school board. In other systems a committee of teachers, administrators, trustees, and other stakeholders collectively develops draft policy that is then forwarded to the board for approval. Some boards have policy committees that review all policies annually and propose for board approval those policy changes they perceive to be needed.

Twenty-five trustees, all chairpersons of their boards, were asked for, and gave, their perceptions of the state of teacher evaluation policy and practice in Alberta and in their school jurisdiction. Some of these trustees were disgruntled with current practice, but few suggested that their teacher evaluation policy needed substantial revision. A number of suggestions for improvement were made. The time appears to be right for a significant review of the process of policy development in Alberta's school jurisdictions and for revision in teacher evaluation policies and practices.

The trustees in this study commented that they were not as informed as they might be about teacher evaluation, and about policy development in general. Trustees could be kept better informed about the concepts, purposes, and processes of teacher evaluation, about the variety of potential teacher evaluation criteria and the implications of using each of these criteria, and about the legal and moral responsibilities associated with teacher evaluation. They also appear to need more information about what is happening in classrooms and schools with regard to teacher evaluation. Trustees also could be more proactive in asking for this information and in ensuring that teacher evaluation policy decisions are monitored, reviewed with rigor, and revised as new information and insights become available.

For example, it is interesting that in the discussions about policy revisions not one of the trustees interviewed suggested the need to study how well their existing teacher evaluation policy was working before making suggestions for changes. The evaluation of policies, if done at all, may not be done well. Also important was the number of trustees' remarks on how difficult, if not impossible, it was to dismiss incompetent teachers. Obviously, steps to do so must be taken with care to ensure that due process and fairness are observed.

One of the most critical of the trustee roles is that of policy maker. Good policy making is based, at least in part, on informed perspectives and on a sense that policies are temporary solutions that need to be refined and improved. Based on our sample of board chairpersons, it is apparent that school trustees in Alberta need to become better informed about teacher evaluation and about the nature of policy development.

Summative and Formative Evaluation

The second key issue that emerged from the interviews was the contrasting views held on the purpose of teacher evaluation. For many trustees teacher evaluation was perceived to promote professional development, commonly referred to as formative evaluation. For others it was seen as an exercise to ensure accountability, or summative evaluation. For a small number it was about focusing behavior and attitudes on explicit (and implicit) goals, collecting information, reflecting on progress, and revising plans, or about learning. The trustees' responses relating to this matter of formative and summative teacher evaluation call for some further elaboration. Teacher evaluation, although intended to serve both purposes, one of improvement and the other of accountability, may not be serving either purpose well. According to the literature on teacher evaluation (see Chapter 2) and some of the findings of this study, there is little evidence that teacher evaluation as traditionally practiced affects how teachers teach, and how students learn. When asked for their perceptions of the impact of teacher evaluation, trustees were able in some cases to make inferences about the effects. For example, there is a widespread belief that administrators and teachers are now paying more attention to what is happening in the classroom. Examples are known of teachers who have "improved," teachers who feel more satisfied about their teaching because of the feedback they have received, and teachers who have left the profession. There are also examples of teachers paying more attention to their professional development. But there was no convincing evidence that these things have happened as a result of teacher evaluation.

The possibility exists that teacher development occurs because teachers want it to, because conditions in the school are conducive to teacher growth, because committed teachers seek opportunities for learning. The improvement of teachers and teaching may be the result of a culture that supports teachers as learners. A variety of activities may assist teachers in their learning, including giving feedback and sharing information collected during teacher evaluation.

Trustees would like to hold teachers accountable for what they do in the classroom. However, it is clear that trustees are not sure about what teachers are doing. As a result it seems that, other than in a few extreme cases, it is not possible for trustees to hold teachers accountable. Teacher evaluation can be a process where supervisors and colleagues work with teachers to help them to determine what they are doing and how to improve what they are doing. Teacher evaluation is about improvement at the same time that it is about accountability. How colleagues, supervisors, and trustees fit into both these roles has not been clearly determined.

If current policies and practices of teacher evaluation are not helping some teachers to make career decisions, to discover that teaching is or is not the right career for them, then perhaps these practices should change. There are examples of good practices that have helped teachers make these decisions. The data collected in this phase of the larger study suggest that a number of trustees are frustrated because teacher evaluation has failed to hold teachers accountable. Some believe strongly that existing practice has failed to remove incompetent teachers. It is safe to generalize that teachers in general do not want incompetent teachers in the classrooms. But neither do they, nor do most people, want teachers to be treated capriciously and unfairly.

Good teacher evaluation policies and procedures, at the very least, are about the fair and just treatment of people. Our students deserve to be evaluated properly and accurately. They also deserve to be given opportunities to improve. So clearly do teachers. They deserve humane, caring, and respectful treatment, and this takes time. It is obvious that trustees alone cannot develop and implement teacher evaluation policies and procedures that will be effective in achieving either the accountability or the professional development function they desire for teacher evaluation.

Teacher Evaluation and the Governance of Schools

Many trustees in this study expressed frustration with their board's apparent inability to dismiss incompetent teachers and with what they perceived to be the role of the ATA in protecting all teachers including those who are incompetent. The ATA was often criticized for being too protective, and teacher evaluations undertaken by ATA members were sometimes assumed to be "biased" in favor of teachers. Principals and superintendents were sometimes viewed as being "all on the teacher's side" and reluctant to write negative comments in their teacher evaluation reports. Many trustees felt that teacher evaluation should be a management process to be used in exercising authority over teachers.

Evaluation certainly has embedded in it elements of power and authority. Supervisors have the authority and also the responsibility to recommend that a teacher be retained, promoted, demoted, transferred, suspended, put on probation, or dismissed. School boards have the legal obligation to formulate teacher evaluation policy. Each teacher has the right to expect fair and just treatment. The ATA has an obligation to provide services, including legal services, for its members. Parents and children have the right to expect a quality learning environment in the classroom. How all of this should translate into workable teacher evaluation policies and procedures in the various schools and jurisdictions is a challenging question. Ideally, a collaborative process involving all stakeholders in the jurisdiction should be used. The focus in such deliberations must be on the common good. However, in resolving some of the most difficult problems the adversarial process may be unavoidable and the only way of ensuring that justice for all is achieved.

Conclusion

The analysis of school trustees' perceptions of current teacher evaluation policies and practices in Alberta school jurisdictions reveals that serious attention must be given to the review and revision of these policies and practices. Three specific observations emerged from this phase of the study and are offered here in summary:

1. The teacher evaluation policy formulation and policy review processes need improvement to ensure that these policies achieve their intended objectives. These policy processes could benefit from a reconceptualization that recognizes continuous learning and regular review. Teacher evaluation policies need to be thought of as tentative responses to the problem of attaining effective learning environments. As solutions are sought, our understanding of the problem may change and new strategies may be more appropriate. The process is cyclical and governed by our capacity to learn.
2. Teacher evaluation policies and practices must do what they are intended to do: assist teachers to create effective learning environments for students and provide teachers, administrators, and school boards with information that helps them to enhance classroom and school learning environments. Teacher evaluation to be worthwhile must be meaningfully connected to the other activities of the school and jurisdiction: professional development, planning and goal setting, collegial sharing and cooperative learning, team work, budgeting, and other types of evaluation.
3. School boards should explore the issue of school governance as it relates to the matter of teacher evaluation policies and procedures. Ideally, a collaborative process involving all education stakeholders in the jurisdiction should be used in developing these policies and procedures. When difficult teacher evaluation and teacher competence problems, hopefully few in number, cannot readily be resolved in this way, the adversarial approach may be unavoidable and a way of ensuring that justice for all is achieved.

Chapter 7

A Case Study of the County of Sunshine

Introduction

This particular jurisdiction was chosen because it is a county, and because its enrollment size is generally representative of this type of jurisdiction in Alberta.

The first contact was made by telephone in June, and a follow-up visit was scheduled for July 8, 1991. During this visit the research team met with central office personnel to discuss the nature of the research and their involvement. The administration agreed to participate and suggested two schools, one elementary and one junior high, on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Number of staff
2. Diversity of staff
3. Variety of years of experience of staff
4. Physical accessibility of school plant (with respect to late fall and winter driving conditions).

The administration further agreed to give the research team access, if needed, to teachers from other schools to study particular contexts, for example, teacher evaluation in a small school.

A meeting with the principals was scheduled for the following week. During this meeting the researchers explored the principals' overall views of teacher evaluation and decided on a future action plan. An initial exploratory interview with two assistant superintendents was also held at that time.

It was decided that the research team would make presentations to the staffs of both schools on August 29, 1991 and develop an interview timetable for both schools.

Methodology

The research team conducting this case study comprised two academic staff and two doctoral students. Prior to the interview process, these researchers met with their counterparts from another team to discuss philosophical orientation and methodology. A common understanding of the aims and approaches was developed. This understanding was then compared with that of the research teams for the other cases to ensure that a common thrust and basic underlying objectives were being pursued by all involved.

From these discussions a common set of questions was developed. These questions reflected the overall thrust of the project and were therefore incorporated into the semistructured interview schedule.

The overall thrust of the research project as perceived and followed by the County of Sunshine team comprised three areas of inquiry:

Linkage Between Leadership and Evaluation

Central Questions
"What's the purpose of the policy? What's your idea of a good teacher?"

Source: central office staff, trustees, principals

What is the purpose of teacher evaluation?

What is the role of a teacher? What do you want your teachers to be like?

What is your understanding of the intent of the teacher evaluation policy (local, provincial)?

Teacher Experience

Central Questions
"How useful is the policy for you? What's your idea of a good evaluation?"

Source: Teachers

What does the teacher evaluation policy mean to you?

What do you think evaluations are used for by central office?

How do you use the results?

How do you see your role as a teacher?

What would be the ideal teacher evaluation set-up?

What should principals, central office do to help make evaluation more meaningful and helpful? What should they *not* do?

The Teacher Evaluation Process

Central Questions
"Share your experience"

Source: Teachers and their evaluators

How did you feel about this evaluation?

What are you going to do with the results?

Would you conduct it differently?

Did it meet your expectations? What was helpful? What wasn't?

What do you use to identify yourself as a good teacher?
or

What do you use to identify a good teacher (evaluators)?

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Conclusions

"What does the superintendent do, that seems to have impact on how Teacher Evaluations are done in the schools?"

The research team hoped that a number of questions are answerable and would be answered during the course of this study:

1. What leadership strategies (of superintendent, board, principal) worked to effect meaningful implementation?
2. Do administrators and teachers share the same idea regarding what is a good teacher?
3. What evaluation processes worked and why?
4. Potential other ways of using teacher evaluation policies?
5. Is wealth of district a significant factor?

The first interview session on July 15, 1991 with central office administration was set up in such a way that one team member would interview and one would observe the interviewing techniques and record the observations of the interaction and responses. The observations of the two researchers were then compared to ensure a satisfactory level of consistency.

System Level Views on Teacher Evaluation

The goals of school level and system level administrators are described in the policy, and the six purposes of teacher evaluation are outlined in the areas of: quality of instruction, competent instruction, meeting students' needs, assistance for teachers experiencing difficulty, and decision making regarding contracts, teacher placement, and certification.

The teacher evaluation guide is quite extensive, nine pages in length, and is presented in three major sections that cover teaching strategies, personal and professional qualities, and educational growth of pupils. Teachers are evaluated using a common format that covers the three categories listed above. The description of learning activities is divided into sections on classroom observation, the planning process, the physical environment, teacher directed learning activities, learning environment and classroom management, and student evaluation and feedback. The personal and professional qualities includes such things as appearance, attitude and enthusiasm, knowledge of subject area, ability to motivate, and so forth. Educational growth of students covers degree of student success, cooperation, enthusiasm, and involvement, overall attitude, and appropriateness of student dress. Three more sections are titled: contributions to the school and community, recommendations, and commendations. The final page is an *Engagement Rate Observation Form,* which is a form for noting classroom observation data.

Teacher Evaluation as Perceived by Central Office Administration

Jane O'Hara: Assistant Superintendent

Jane, new to the administration team, indicated that she knew little about the process from the viewpoint of central office but agreed to speak to what happened where she was at the time of implementation.

She was not aware of who was involved in developing the policy, but observed that it would have gone through typical channels and would have been developed by the Policy Handbook Committee. Jane said that the schools decide who will be on this committee, and it generally is decided on the basis of interest. Principals introduced the policy at their schools. Evaluations were conducted both by the principal and by central office. The central office administrators made quick visits in the beginning, but the process evolved as principals received training and became more comfortable with the evaluations. Talk and collaboration with teachers along with sharing of information at administrative workshops also helped the process.

The process is now looked at positively and involves recognition of teachers. The process is a takeoff for staff development. She sees the process in a positive way even for individuals having difficulty. The process has changed to one of really getting behind people who need extra support. It is an opportunity for teachers to make their own goals. However, it is a pretty uncomfortable process for some teachers because they don't like people in their classroom for any reason. For those in trouble, Jane describes the process as collaboration on the decision "to let go." Jane defines the *ideal teacher* as one who is: learning, growing, and a reflective practitioner.

The evaluation process generally starts at the end of September with informal observations. There is opportunity for teacher support. As a resource person she could also be requested by a teacher to come and observe and provide feedback. The instruments are used for the evaluation, but they do not drive it. The culture is turning to "teaming" with a "school resource team model." A formal appeal process is in the policy handbook. Trustees are also interested in policy, and each trustee is assigned to a number of schools.

John Chamberland: Deputy Superintendent

John has been in the system for many years in various capacities in teaching and administration, and has occupied the present position of deputy superintendent since before the 1984 provincial teacher evaluation policy mandate.

Prior to 1984 the teacher evaluation policy was not as focused and precise, with specific aspects such as frequency of visits not indicated. The onus for evaluation prior to 1984 rested primarily with the superintendent. After 1984, the policy became more specific and more responsibility for supervision was given to the principals, in addition to the superintendent's role. The specificity of the policy also made it necessary for central office to add an assistant superintendent position as well as a "rotating assistant superintendent" position created by seconding principals from within the system.

In making policy, the board generally acts on the recommendations of the Policy Committee, which consists of four principals or teachers, central office administration, and four board members. The committee meets four times per year and engages in a continual policy review. They also use feedback from different levels of the system for the new policies. The first draft receives feedback from the board for initial changes, then it is circulated system-wide. All feedback is collected by the Policy Committee and used in making revisions. The final draft is then presented to the board for approval. The tenure of the teacher representatives on the committee is one year, although they may be re-elected.

Central office administrators, and John in particular, see their role as facilitators or helpers. Their main concern is getting around to as many teachers as the policy guidelines specify.

The board's expectations from central office administration and the teachers are that the educators are teaching competently and that central office administrators ensure that is the case. They expect teachers to be current in their practice, both in terms of instruction and in terms of using the latest technology.

The two positive features of the provincial policy, as reflected in their local policy, are:

1. the fact that the involvement of principals in evaluation has resulted in a team approach to evaluation, with central office and principals sharing ideas; and
2. the timelines set down in the policy ensure that there is an attempt to complete the required number of visitations.

John had university courses in clinical supervision, but he uses an adapted model that better suits his situation. Also, ongoing courses or inservices are provided for administrators.

The evaluation procedure begins with the central office administration producing a list of teachers to be evaluated during that year according to the policy. This list is shared only with the principals, who can evaluate any teachers on the list that central office administrators are unable to evaluate during the year. This list is not made known to the teachers in case an announced visit does not take place. The perception in central office is that teachers prefer unannounced visits and that the whole climate of the visit is not as unnatural if teachers do not know it is coming.

The evaluation policy includes an appendix containing a framework for judging teaching practices. This extensive framework was developed by the teachers, but central office evaluators do not use it because they feel "nobody could live up to that!"

John uses a number of qualitative indicators of class atmosphere and student success when he evaluates teachers. These include:

- positive atmosphere and high student motivation
- student products—quality of writing, reading, organization.

Because it would be impossible to look at every student, John spot checks, choosing top students and non-involved students, and some in the mid range. John tries to spend at least two periods with a teacher, more if instinct tells him there is more he should know.

New teachers are visited by the principal, the superintendent, and the assistant superintendent. If the teacher is doing well, he or she may only receive three visits in the first year. If there are problems, the teacher may be visited significantly more often. During the visits an attempt is made to coach the teacher through the problem. In some cases the new teacher may be put in touch with another teacher who might be able to help.

Similarly, teachers at risk receive help in defining their problems and generating new strategies. John feels that these teachers should take the initiative in recognizing their problems and rectifying them rather than being satisfied with a mediocre level of teaching.

All teachers have the opportunity to visit other teachers' classrooms. The central office provides for substitute teachers and on occasion facilitates contact between two specific teachers. Generally, however, it is up to the teachers to take the initiative. Teachers occasionally take advantage of this provision.

John stressed the team approach that central office administration maintains in working with the principals. In his opinion, principals are now more comfortable than was initially the case about doing teacher evaluations, although some still have concerns. The central office administrators encourage principals to discuss issues and problems and the strategies principals intend to use to solve them. This is done at the regular monthly administrators' meetings.

Another means of communication between principals and central office is through the sharing of teacher evaluation reports. John uses the reports to establish some context before walking into a teacher's classroom.

He also uses the positive aspects of the reports in his opening conversation with the teacher.

A third significant area of cooperation with principals was the rotating assistant superintendent position. Initially, the principals were seconded to this position for six months to a year for the purpose of conducting teacher evaluations. This arrangement was mutually beneficial in that it relieved the pressure from central office administrators, while giving the principals the opportunity to see other schools in operation. This position has since evolved into a regular full-time assistant superintendent position.

Jack McCoy: Superintendent

Jack has been in this school district for 14 years either as superintendent or as deputy superintendent. A teacher evaluation policy was already in place prior to the mandate of the provincial policy in 1984. The policy was modified after the mandate, but the evaluations are not done because they are mandated. He notes that there is merit in an evaluation policy for a number of reasons. He believes that it is important for administrators to be in classrooms in order to stay in touch and to keep informed about what is going on. He sees classroom observations as an opportunity to look at learning and teaching and to look for meaningfulness in the classroom as opposed to using checklists. The process in place allows him to be informed and to be more personable and keeps the lines of communication open

The process is not used for monitoring, but to enable him to become aware of needs, not only of individuals, but teachers as a group for future workshops and/or professional development days. He would prefer to use the term *mentoring* or *coaching* rather than evaluation.

The purpose of the policy is to provide feedback in a supportive manner. Overall, the evaluations are quite positive, but the process does identify teachers who are having difficulty, and more time is spent helping individuals improve. He feels that the process works to the benefit of the teachers, especially new teachers.

Evaluation is a high priority in the system. Administrators as well as teachers are evaluated. In addition, roughly two school evaluations are conducted each year.

Teacher Evaluation as Perceived by School Administrators

James Smith: Small School Principal

James feels that a positive aspect of the local teacher evaluation policy is that it makes evaluation consistent and ensures that all teachers are evaluated. In addition, the approach to evaluation by central office evaluators is positive. A drawback to the evaluation is that time constraints result in half-day visits at best, after which summative reports are written.

This principal has taken an effective teaching course and a quality leadership course. In addition, he has many years of experience evaluating teachers and therefore feels that he is well prepared for the task.

The biggest problem he encounters is time pressure. He teaches 75% of the time in addition to his administrative and evaluation duties. Another problem he mentions is that new teachers do not read the school or system policy handbook and get into difficulties in the classroom on issues that are clearly discussed in the handbook. Both of these are particularly significant problems in a small school. In the previous year 50% of the staff were new teachers—a frequent phenomenon in a small rural school. Because these teachers needed more feedback and help than those already on staff, the principal hired a substitute for his classes on those occasions when he worked with the new teachers. He also invited the new teachers to come into his classroom when he was teaching. The new teachers were expecting to be evaluated, so they had no difficulties with the concept of the principal evaluating them. Those who had been in the school for a number of years had more difficulty in adjusting because they assumed that he would use more stringent criteria for experienced teachers.

This principal's evaluation strategy consists of a two-day process per evaluation. The first day he observes the teacher's classes and discusses them with the teacher afterward. Three days later he does a full-day formal observation and evaluation. He also uses clinical supervision data collection charts, which he has adapted for his own use. He admits that he spends far more time with the new teachers than with the experienced ones whose classes are functioning well.

In addition, this principal talks to all his teachers in the staff room in the morning, during lunch, and after school. Staff meetings, which are held in the mornings before class or at noon three times a month, focus on strategies to deal with specific children.

James believes that his teachers are too busy to be engaged in peer coaching.

Tom Swenson: William Hatfield Junior High School

For Tom, the only effect of the provincial policy on teacher evaluation was increased clarification of existing policy. In Tom's experience the school board was always supportive of any teacher supervision initiatives and provided substitute teachers whenever necessary for such activities as peer observation and visitations to other schools. Tom feels that the numerous inservices about teacher evaluation, as well as the fact that the school system policy and philosophy were developed collectively, effectively prepared the administrators for the task of evaluation. Tom also took graduate courses in clinical supervision as well as curriculum and instruction.

Tom administers a fairly large school by rural standards. He teaches about 20% of the time. Initially he had only one vice-principal to share the evaluation load and found that he could not keep up. Now he has two vice-principals, which has made the task achievable. Time still remains the most limiting factor for him.

Tom approaches evaluation from a team perspective. At the beginning of the year the three administrators decide on an evaluation schedule, making sure that each one is involved in supervising a spectrum of subject areas rather than supervising exclusively in one area. Tom has several evaluation models and data collecting instruments that he discusses with his evaluation team and from which they are free to choose what is most suitable for them.

Tom uses student performance as an indicator of program performance and as background information on how well students are performing in different classes, to get a "better idea of what's going on in the school."

Tom firmly believes that teacher evaluation is a part of a larger process and that teacher supervision does not necessarily mean being in the classroom. Other contacts with teachers include subject area meetings, small, informal meetings that are held as needed in addition to the monthly staff meeting. Tom also spends as much time as he can in the staff room and in the hallways. He makes an effort to be in the staff room early in the morning and to talk with as many teachers as possible.

Tom has discussed peer supervision with his staff and some interest was expressed. However, he feels that such activities cannot be imposed by the principal, but must be initiated by the teachers themselves. Support in terms of substitute teachers would be available if the teachers did propose a plan.

Dick Magnusson: Raintree Elementary School

Like Tom, Dick noted that the school district already had a policy in place prior to the provincial policy and the only effect the provincial policy had was increased clarification of the existing policy. In his view, the county has good programs for professional development, including opportunities to observe other teachers. Teachers are chosen to participate on the basis of what they are observing and their philosophy on teaching and learning. Teachers are sent to other schools to observe innovative practices and the implementation of new practices such as whole language learning.

His impression of the process district wide is that all principals have received training in evaluation and some have even had postgraduate work. The evaluation process was extended to include principals about four years ago based on principles established by ASCD. The concept of evaluation now extends across all levels from the individual in the classroom to the whole school.

Dick administers an elementary school with some really good programs (as noted by others), and many pilot programs are started at his school. Dick noted that two teachers will be doing collaborative teaching next year. In his experience, the district ethos is directed to implementing new ideas and is backed up with rewards for teachers who are doing innovative things. Currently the district is working on meaningfulness in teaching, but there is substantial freedom in schools as to what will be emphasized.

Dick feels that he has a progressive staff who are personally motivated to learn. The staff are interested in program continuity and it is one of the current areas of discussion among staff.

Dick approaches evaluation from a team perspective working with the assistant principal. At the individual level he tries to develop a comfort level. He uses a mutual supervision process of getting good ideas from each other. He finds that the process is not always as fruitful as it could be because teachers need time for reflection as well as working on what they are currently doing.

Dick has discussed peer evaluation with the teachers. Although up to 40 administration periods are available to cover peer evaluations, he did not feel that this would be fruitful because the teachers are not trained as observers.

William Hatfield Junior High School

Background Information

The school has about 30 teachers, a principal, and two vice-principals. There is a wide range of teacher experience (2-25+ years). Teacher turnover is low. Class sizes are generally about 24 students. For a school of this size there is a considerable variety of program offerings.

Administrators' Stories

Tom Swenson: Principal

Although Tom's views on evaluation are presented above, this section highlights his personal philosophy, in order to increase our understanding of the school context in relation to teacher evaluation. Tom stresses the concepts of school staff as a team and evaluation as an integral and integrated part of the educational process:

> I think we make the mistake of looking at teacher evaluation in isolation. You have to look at it globally, as an educational process.
>
> I always start from the perspective that what we are trying to do is make good teachers better, and make us a more effective and efficient organization.
>
> I think that's where you start: developing the feeling that you're in this together. That your problems are not just your problems in isolation. So if I've got a problem, I do not have to deal with it alone.
>
> I think an example I can give you is that with the administrator's teaching assignments, the staff has requested that we keep our teaching assignments as low as possible, so that we can get in the classrooms as much as possible. Probably if we were to be criticized, and if the staff was to be critical of the administration, it would be that we do not spend enough time. And I take that as a complimentary criticism.

Tom had master's level courses in clinical supervision as part of his graduate work in curriculum and instruction. He did not see these courses as helpful in terms of making him a qualified evaluator at their completion, but he did find them helpful in enabling him to develop his personal framework for evaluation:

> In isolation, I can't say that they were particularly helpful, but I think what they did is they helped solidify personal experience, personal philosophies, personal beliefs, and gave you another bag of tricks to be able to use, because every situation is unique and every staff member is unique. You have to be able to help them.... Well, I think the only thing I would emphasize as far as personal philosophy is the one that teacher evaluation is just a part of a larger process and that teacher supervision isn't necessarily being in the classroom ... I spend a lot of time in the staff room and in the hallways. In the morning I make an effort to visit with as many teachers as I can before school.

Jerry Carpenter: Vice-Principal

According to Jerry, there are two types of evaluation carried out in the school system: summative and formative. To Jerry, summative evaluation is "something that's negative" while formative evaluation is considered to be positive. Summative evaluations in the school system are always carried out by central office personnel and he feels that they are looked on critically by the person being evaluated as well as by the evaluators. Summative evaluations are used primarily to determine such things as permanent certification and dismissal. On the other hand, Jerry contends that formative evaluation within the system is based on the premise that "I am a good teacher" and is meant to help a teacher improve on the skills she or he already possesses.

Preconferences are not a part of the evaluation process in Jerry's school. However, Jerry does not see this as a problem and although he acknowledges "all that theory stuff" that says that preconferences should be held, he does not think they are healthy for the teacher. According to Jerry, a preconference is likely to result in an orchestrated lesson.

As a new administrator, Jerry was not able to comment on exactly what approach he will take to formative evaluation but stresses that he will try to see all the teachers he has been assigned to evaluate at least twice a year. He hopes that evaluation is something that will be welcomed by the teachers in his school. Jerry believes it is important that he follow-up on his evaluations by acting as a facilitator so that the teacher can more readily act on the suggestions and recommendations made by the evaluator.

Jerry feels that it is not necessary for evaluators to take special courses. He assumes that administrators are given the responsibility of evaluation because of their ability to work with other people, and according to Jerry, "you do not give courses in working with other people, therefore, you do not give courses in evaluation." He sees evaluation as a tool that is used to address people's problems.

Teachers' Stories

Although the teachers were clearly divided on a number of key issues, a characteristic pattern soon became discernible in the interviews conducted by the interviewers:

1. the teachers had little knowledge of either the content or purpose of the board's evaluation policy, thus missing the context for their own evaluation experiences; and
2. the issue of drop-in evaluations was usually addressed early in the interviews, giving the impression that this subject must have been discussed among the teachers at some point in the past; their reaction to this issue seemed to be a shorthand representation of their beliefs about teacher evaluation.

The teachers' views on evaluation and its relationship to the drop-in issue fell into three categories:

1. critical of drop-in;
2. qualified support of drop-in;
3. supportive of drop-in.

The three groups were approximately equivalent in terms of numbers of adherents, although the critics were more vocal than the supporters.

Generally, those who were critical of the drop-in policy saw teacher evaluation in terms of teacher supervision or professional development. Those who gave qualified support to the drop-in policy generally talked of evaluation in terms of professional or employee accountability, but beginning teachers saw a real need for supervision, guidance, professional development, and thorough follow-up. Those who gave unqualified support to the drop-in policy viewed evaluation in terms of political accountability and public relations, where unless a teacher is really having problems the whole process becomes a formality and a pat on the back.

Aside from the drop-in issue, most teachers had strong opinions about whether evaluators should be subject specialists. Although some teachers saw training in evaluation or supervision as essential, the majority emphasized knowledge of subject area and substantial teaching experience as absolutely essential.

Overall, the teachers felt that central office was supportive of any professional initiative on the part of the teachers (in terms of providing substitute teachers or arranging visits), but that teachers were too busy to initiate such action. Teachers from all three philosophical orientations also acknowledged the administration's efforts to use evaluation as a vehicle to give positive feedback described as "ego-boost, a pat on the back."

On the negative side, teachers from all three groups mentioned that they did not know the administration's purpose for evaluation (whether overall or at any specific time—"did my number come up or did somebody complain?") and depending on their beliefs about teacher evaluation, this caused varying levels of anxiety.

A more detailed description of these issues appears below, as specific themes are described and analyzed.

Analysis of Themes: Teacher Interviews

As the interview transcripts were categorized, the following four themes emerged:

1. *Teacher Orientation/Disposition Re Evaluation*
   Feelings toward evaluation as done here
   Feelings about appeal procedures or postconference
   Image of teachers as projected by central office behavior
   Teachers' awareness of policy
   Teachers' experiences of specific instances
2. *Purpose of Evaluation*
   Teacher use of evaluation results
   Usefulness of evaluation for teachers
   What teachers need from evaluation
   Purpose of evaluation as defined by teachers
   Relationship between teacher and student performance
   What purpose central office has for evaluation (as seen by teacher)
   Relationship between teacher and central office as seen by teacher
3. *Major Issues in Evaluation for Teachers*
   Critique of drop-in
   Support of drop-in
   Qualified support of drop-in
   Should evaluators be subject specialists
4. *Teachers' Suggestions*
   Teachers' suggestions for improving the evaluation process in the school and school system

Theme 1: Teacher Orientation/Disposition Toward Evaluation

The first subtheme, *Feelings toward evaluation as done here,* derived from copious responses; indeed, many teachers returned to this subject several times during the interview as they developed their thoughts. Most refer to central office as being supportive of teachers. The positive feelings expressed about the evaluations experienced to date tended to be general and ranged from "harmless" to "I felt very good about the evaluation process." The negative comments tended to deal with specific issues and specific experiences of evaluations. The positive comments outnumbered the negative.

The rest of the subthemes comprise less numerous contributions. In the case of the second subtheme, *Feelings about appeal procedures or postconference,* comments were made primarily by those teachers who experienced some difference of opinion with regard to their evaluation report or who saw evaluation as supervision and therefore saw a need for extensive consultation between the supervisor and the teacher.

The responses constituting the third subtheme, *Image of teachers as projected by central office behavior,* were characterized not only by paucity, but also by vagueness. The teachers agreed that they did not get information about how central office wants them to act, or how central office sees the teachers in "the overall scheme of things" from the evaluation or the evaluation report. Most teachers indicated that they had never consciously thought about "what central office thinks about their teachers," or about what expectations they have of the teachers. Most indicated that they got subliminal or subconscious messages about central office's view of "what it means to be a teacher here" from a variety of interactions with both levels of administration, both in informal and formal situations. When asked to interpret these observations, most teachers were unable to articulate these beyond using buzzwords such as teachers are professionals, facilitators of learning, and central office is supportive.

The fourth subtheme, *Teachers' awareness of policy,* consists primarily of various guesses at what the policy might be or admissions of ignorance of the policy. The exceptions were individuals who had some reservations about the process or product of their evaluation and consequently made a conscious effort to read the policy.

The last subtheme, *Teachers' experiences of specific evaluation instances*, yielded fewer responses than might be expected. Speculation as to whether this was because of teachers' fear of being recognized in the report or whether fading memory was the cause are not particularly fruitful without appropriate data; however, the pattern of responses received falls into these categories: those remembering a bad experience; those remembering a first-year experience; and those remembering an unusual experience (where the evaluation did not follow the expected pattern). Generally, those who had normal experiences did not remember any details; indeed, most had difficulty remembering how many times they were evaluated or when was the last time they were evaluated.

Some comments from the teachers to illustrate the range of responses in the subthemes are given below.

Feelings Toward Evaluation as Done Here

Teachers generally agree that central office wants to be supportive. Evaluations are not used by central office to intimidate or manipulate teachers, but sometimes are used that way by school administrators. In specific instances, examples, or references, anxiety about evaluation is apparent.

> They foster, I think, a reverse feeling. Last year I had an evaluation done by a new vice-principal. And I was very upset about it. So I don't think—I think the process that this county uses, which I think is solidified in policy is not a good one.
>
> Well, we tend to joke around because it's your turn to be evaluated and they all kind of laugh. Especially when the superintendent comes in. Somebody usually goes around "Superintendent alert!" So everybody's on their toes. "Is he here to see me, or just the principal?" They all get a joke "Aw, it's your turn to be evaluated." I think it just depends on the teacher. They might take it as a way to improve their teaching, or they might take it that it's criticism of their teaching. Generally, I think, most of them receive it pretty well.
>
> You're just aware, of course, that they're there. You go "For God's sake you guys, behave, or I'll kill you!" You know, that sort of thing. You know, "Don't be total animals, today!"
>
> I don't know if I was ever formally evaluated, but the deputy superintendent was in several times. Yeah, he would come in and sit and observe a class and then I think he tried to schedule it before a prep so then during the prep he would take time to go over the evaluation and provide both positive comments and where improvements could be made. In a very constructive way. I like that.
>
> They're not out very often. They evaluate when a person is coming up for their permanent contract or whatever. And if they're asked to come in and evaluate, they do so. And I think there's a certain number of visits that they have to pay our administrators and they check them off. And they're glad when they're over with. So, you know, I believe that's the extent.

Feelings About Appeal Procedures or Postconference

Those who disagreed with an evaluation thought the appeal procedure was ineffective, or made teachers look bad.

Anti-drop-ins thought the postconference was inadequately done: too long between evaluation and feedback, or irrelevant feedback.

Pro-drop-ins thought the postconference was fine: a pat on the back and not crucial.

> I think for a teacher, like a lot of us who really care about the profession, I think it's insulting to be treated, evaluated without anybody ever asking us what our intention is. Where we're going and why we're doing what we're doing.... And then, you know, the county would like to say that we have a recourse because we can react in writing and so on. But, you know, so I did react in writing and so on, but again, no feedback to that, no response to that, it's just as if it goes into thin air ... And then later, this school has a chance for us to sit down with the administration and talk about things and I raised this issue and all I got, again, was a very defensive attitude that I was off-base. It was my problem.
>
> I perceive it as summative if they write it out and send a copy to the superintendent. I consider that summative. Now, sometimes, and on mine it said, "I look forward to visiting your class again sometime to see how things are going," and I think the argument was once made to me that it's not completely summative because it says that. But I just don't find that.
>
> You may get a rushed interview right after, and then a week, maybe two weeks down the road you get a form letter typed up giving you a very accurate, of course, description of what your classroom was like.
>
> I think it's a very positive thing that they do. And they always—they're really good at it because they always start off with what you're doing right. You know how they can do that? So that's good ... I mean, you say "Hurry up. It's my lunch time. Boost this evaluation!" And they always follow up with a written one some time later. It's usually quite a while.

Image of Teachers as Projected by Central Office Behavior

Teachers had difficulty answering this question. Teachers as professionals was the common answer, as well as "They are supportive."

> I think they're caught in the system. But the impression they give me is that a teacher is somebody who has to be watched. That teachers can be off-track and you have to be careful to make sure, as a central office person, they can justify that they have seen these teachers so they're covered. So it's like being a worker and you have to check up to make sure the worker is working appropriately. That's the impression I get. I see a hierarchy that people don't like to talk about very often, but when that happens to you, all of

> a sudden you clearly see this level here and these people here are responsible for keeping tabs on these people here. And yet, I find it kind of silly, because with one visit last year and none the year before, they have really no idea how I'm reacting with kids or what hidden messages I'm sending to kids, or how well I'm preparing or—they don't have a clue.
>
> Impression of what teachers are like. I feel—I really admire our central office people. Honestly. I feel that they do as much as they can for us. Because they have a strong opinion of teachers and the teachers that they have working for them. And they're behind us always, all the way. That's the way I feel. That they are toward us.
>
> Okay. I think they view teachers as being very important. That's evident in that they don't come down with this condescending sort of attitude. They're there just, I mean, they've been in the same sort of situations before. So, they're used to that. Okay? I think they're very—they try to be as positive as possible. And the role they see of teachers? Again, they're very important, you know, if they can help in any way to make the situation better, or make the teacher—help him grow, then they're there to do that. Rather than "Let's pick apart every little detail." I think they view it as a positive experience for us. So they're probably seeing us as "Let's see if we can just help you out. There's an area that may need developing."
>
> Gee. That's a tough one! I think they must make something known somehow. But I guess it's not really stated. They always say "We appreciate your work in extracurricular and programs you developed" and things like that.
>
> Now that's interesting. I would assume like, yes, I know what they expect of me ... I've been here for so many years—I don't know how I did! It must be some other way entirely. It has to be. Although the evaluation process does, as well. You know, because they say—what they say that you're doing right obviously they're encouraging you to keep doing that, so I don't know if they even say what is expected of us or whether it's through all the curriculum stuff that we get and all the professional development we get, we know what we're supposed to do. I don't know! That's a good question. I don't know where I know that from.

Teachers' Awareness of Policy

Few teachers were aware; usually only those who disagreed with their evaluation made a point of looking up the policy.

> Because I was so annoyed about all this, I went and read the policy for this in the county, and I notice that they set down in detail the sort of things people look at. Certainly the one that was done last year was not done in a formal, organized way.
>
> I don't think it's ever been mentioned to me or discussed in front of me that the policy is every three years and for a new teacher it's ...
>
> No. I thought that they had to—I'm familiar with it, but I've forgotten. Don't they have to evaluate us once every...

Teachers' Experiences of Specific Instances

When evaluations were routine, teachers often could not even remember how many times they were evaluated.

Anti-drop-ins often recalled specific instances of an unsatisfactory evaluation process. Recent and established teachers often recalled evaluations from their rookie year(s).

> You're glancing over to make sure you're doing the right thing. Trying to get what their impression is of the class. I don't know what they were looking for. What techniques, or if they were just getting an overall impression of my teaching ability.
>
> That's why I'm so keen about this clinical supervision, because the way the county does it there is no preconference. You're caught by surprise. Somebody arrives. Therefore, it becomes a very poor situation. Because you have no idea when the person coming in, what they're looking at, or what their agenda is, or what their impressions are. And therefore you're completely at the mercy of their perceptions. So in my case I was very happy with the class that I taught. Because I knew the context. And yet the person who evaluated it was thinking that they didn't know what my objective was for the class. So we were just talking different—we were not on the same wavelength at all.
>
> And I think somebody came in—I can't remember! I think somebody came in maybe last year or the year before. But, since then I've hardly had any.
>
> My experiences with evaluations were very positive. It's nice to have that feedback.
>
> The first evaluation I had was more on discipline. I was having problems with discipline ... Actually my first evaluation was probably the best. It's where I learned more than any other evaluation I've ever had ... Well, it was geared exactly to me.

Theme 2: Purpose of Evaluation

Teacher Use of Evaluation Results

Most often teachers' attitude was to "file-and-forget-it," unless there were some relevant suggestions.

The pro-drop-ins reported that they liked to read the reports for positive feedback, compliments, and as an ego boost.

> Not that the evaluation was negative. You know, I have a lot of letters if I ever decide to go to another job that are great letters.
>
> I always keep them on file but as actually to the content of them, you know, those things that I perceive as being positive I just make a mental note and file it and make sure that if I too feel they're positive kinds of things, I try to make sure that I keep incorporating them into my teaching process. If there are things that I perceive as either negative or some direction for changing something, I consider them within the context of the program I'm teaching,

> and the kids and the curriculum and if I feel it's legitimate, I try to accommodate. If I don't feel it's legitimate, I make it a point to go back and say, you know, I'm doing this way because ... and hopefully there is that amount of independence in the teacher to make those kinds of decisions.

> Well, I get it. It's confidential labeled to me. They must have a copy at the office. I haven't really been too concerned about that. Maybe someone should be. I never thought of that. But I have them on file someplace and I'm sure that confidentiality is kept. I don't have any doubts about that.

> I think in some ways it's a rubber stamp, I guess unless there are problems. I suppose if some parent or someone said "I'm concerned" then they would come in, but ...

Usefulness of Evaluation for Teachers

New teachers more often than any of the other teachers reported receiving useful suggestions, especially from John Chamberland, the deputy superintendent.

The anti-drop-ins found the evaluations generally useless.

The comments from the rest of the teachers ranged from "nice"; to "irrelevant"; some teachers found the idea that a nonsubject specialist was giving them recommendations "offensive" or "insulting."

> I certainly read them right away. And in one case, it was very useful to me. I think earlier on here, I felt that I was having some difficulty and so on, and the report did help me. Since then, I found that after the first reading, I filed them in my own file and I hardly ever, I don't think I've ever used them.

> They were helpful, but I think they were things I pretty much knew already. What bothered me was why they kept—why were they there if everything was positive? You know, the letters, there's nothing that I could—I read them over. Okay, what are they saying I should work on?

What Teachers Need from Evaluation

In discussing this topic, most teachers said they needed feedback, but this meant different things to different people: some said specific feedback from a specialist would be great, but *not* on an evaluation report.

> I know they're really busy because they have all the other schools and all the other teachers to evaluate. But it would have been nice as a first-year teacher to get a little bit more feedback.

> I felt that maybe they would have helped if they'd come back in a few more weeks to see if those things were, if I'd implemented them, if they were working.

> Again, him being so busy, too, doing everybody else's evaluations, it's tough for him to get back for more feedback. And I think it's maybe my responsibility also, if I need some more feedback, then maybe I should have gone to him more.

> A peer supervision—that's not common in the county. Tremendous defensiveness about that. Teachers are not very excited about that, on the whole, I don't think.

> My personal preference is to more peer type evaluation. People who are generally familiar with the curriculum and the program of studies in more depth, I think, would be more useful from a point of view that you can see how you're addressing curriculum and issues.

> I would hope that our administration knows what they're doing. Knows what each one of us is doing. I know they're always—they don't come in and officially evaluate all of the time, but they walk in the halls and kind of slow down, see what you're doing kind of thing. Which I think is excellent. I think that's really important. They have to know.

Purpose of Evaluation as Defined by Teachers

Anti-drop-ins generally indicated that the purpose of evaluation should be to facilitate professional development, to be able to try new ideas and to consult with other knowledgeable professionals.

The pro-drop-ins stressed accountability: "It's their right as employer, everybody needs to be checked up on, they are accountable to greater powers".

> I don't feel that's anything they shouldn't be doing as a boss, or as someone that is supposed to be knowing what we're doing. I think that's sort of a right that they have.

> Well, I think their purpose should be fairly in line with that. To assist the teachers. Unless the teacher's incompetent and not doing his job. And I still feel there should be some effort made at counseling and saying "Look, this should be done, and this should be done by a certain length of time." If it's not done, well then termination is the course that they should follow. But I think evaluation should be to make sure that things are going well. If it's not, assist and make an effort to see that it does go well, and then if that fails, replacement I guess.

> And you're never made aware of that. Ever. You don't know whether you've come up on the checklist; you've had a parent phone and said, "You better get into that classroom. She's pounding my little boy." You're never aware of that. And I suppose a person would feel—if a person came to your door and said, "Look, your number has come up" and made light of it and you just said, "Well come on in. Let's get it over with" or whatever. But you are never made aware of it. I think it can be a tool that is used. And again, I'm speaking of someone who was a new teacher coming in and the administration, of course, is uncertain of them, as a staff member, they've not worked with them before. And I know this one particular person was having trouble with the kids but she was frightened out of her mind! And visit after visit after visit. It became a persecution that she added to her stress load ... And the antagonism. And I really don't think that she would have quit if there had been steps before the harassment steps. Luckily that doesn't happen to everyone, but our stress loads are different, too.

> I think if there's a weakness there, that's the weakness. I think evaluation has to have some purpose. Some gain for both parties. I think the relationship is essentially a weak one. There needs to be some strength to it. It's an ambiguous one. Someone's doing it because they have to do it. You know? And the other party isn't aware of the reasons behind doing it. So everybody feels uncomfortable about it. Maybe that's not a good analysis of it, but ...

Relationship Between Teacher and Student Performance

The teachers appeared to treat this question as a proxy for *role of the teacher*: most talked about "facilitator of learning" and described it in such terms as: "I present the stuff, but the responsibility for learning is with the student; teachers should not be evaluated on the basis of student performance."

> I have been of concerned that people look at my marks and make comments either and even once they made a positive comment that my students did better than the provincial average and that worried me more than if they hadn't said that, because I didn't feel as though it was me, it was just that I had a good class. I thought, Oh, oh, if they think it's that I'm good because they're higher, what would they think if they were lower? I didn't feel that I could take credit for that. Or be made responsible for it. I'm still trying to figure out exactly what teaching is and what makes a good teacher and I think it's so easy, I mean, I really feel that I could make my class average to up or down at will. I could create a test that would give a high average or a low average. And then when it comes to the provincial exams I could drill my students to that exam. I think, you know, marks are sort of a useful little thing now and then, but they do take us off the point. I haven't figured out—I haven't thought about it enough, the connection between marks and learning, I don't think it's that direct.

> I'm basically a facilitator of kids' learning. Kids are going to learn if they want to and I try to make the situation available for kids so that they can learn on their own, I guess. I'm there for the kids if they need to discuss things, to discuss ideas.

> Well, making sure that they have done, for example, the assignments that will help them achieve. And if they don't choose to do them, well I guess if you've done as much as you can, you know, phoning the parents and say "Well, look, so-and-so hasn't done their work." I mean, if you've done everything that you can think of possible, again, as I said before, it's up to the kid. The kid is basically responsible for what they're going to learn. And if they don't want to learn, they won't.

What Purpose Central Office has for Evaluation (as Seen by Teacher)

Generally teachers did not know what central office's purpose was or how it might have been communicated, but were prepared to discuss their assumptions or guesses about the overall purpose.

The anti-drop-ins tended to see accountability to Alberta Education and taxpayers as the reason behind the evaluation process.

The pro-drop-ins discussed two types of purposes: employee relations and monitoring: "to support teachers, to give positive feedback, to check up on them, particularly on processes such as class control (right of employer); to keep their finger on the pulse, know what is going on." Teachers' voiced their major complaint: "We don't really know what their purpose is! Why are you here today?"

> I wish she had said "Hi, I'm just here to look at your class. Ignore me or whatever." She just sat there. I had to say to her, "What are you doing? Can I do something? What can I do for you?" You know? "Oh, I'm just going to stay here!" I thought it was wrong. If they want to pop in, like I say, unexpectedly, she should have said why I'm here. Because I didn't know why she was sitting in a chair in the back of this room.

> I think it's part of their job to make sure that the position, the job I was hired for, that I am fulfilling my responsibilities and where possible, because they have much more, especially the deputy superintendent, has so much more experience than I do.

> In my first year, I don't know why, they never ever said anything negative, but think I had seven evaluations. Across the hall from me was another first-year teacher who had two. And I—I was very, very anxious about why was I being evaluated so much—I even came out and asked my administrator, you know "Is there a problem? Is there some reason why there's so many evaluations?" And they said "No." So I felt pretty anxious about why the person across the hall wasn't getting any and I was.

> Well, for central office I think it's probably just getting a handle of the situation in schools and seeing, "Hey, everything seems to be running fine here" or whatever. Just so that they feel comfortable and it also protects their persons as far as with the Alberta government. Saying "Okay, it's been done. We've done that." So that's their purpose.

> But I guess as a process I think there's a genuine concern of the administration at all levels in this county to see that, or to feel that the standard of instruction is at at least an acceptable level and if there are concerns, to address the concerns.... You know, our administrators, generally, in the county are pretty public relations sensitive. So some of it may be in response to PR. But, and I guess if they feel it's important and I guess to a degree public relations is, so I would say those two things from a public relations point of view, that they can say that things are being done in an acceptable manner.

> I think outside the classroom, I think generally, evaluation has become an catchword in a lot of things because of the accountability type thing. I think certain types of evaluations are being overdone. Pressure from government and a perceived pressure from the public. And I'm not sure whether it's there or not.

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> But I think the administrators—their purpose of it is not the same as mine. This is what I've said. So what they want to get out of it then the drop-in is perfect.

Relationship Between Teacher and Central Office for Teacher

The relationship was described in somewhat paternalistic terms: "They are supportive of us, they look after us—if we need materials or subs they'll provide." Follow-up questions indicated that teachers did not take the initiative often to avail themselves of the opportunity to engage in professional development activities such as interschool visits. Lack of time was the most frequently stated reason. The vocal anti-drop-ins, who stressed their professionalism, tended to extend their professional development by taking university courses.

> But I think that, in terms of overall goals, I would say that teachers and central office staff are really consistent. I think school administrators have a little more difficulty and I don't know why that is. Partly the strain of being on the front line, I'm sure. Partly that.
>
> And sometimes—and we're free to do this, but I just never have time. I'd love to go and evaluate, or not evaluate, sit in with some of the other teachers that are teaching the subject areas in our county. And that's a way of evaluating yourself, too, I think.
>
> Okay. Well, with the administrators directly in the school, they've got a legitimate concern as far as the development of the kids and you know we're very free to share ideas with the administrators. We're not in a "them and us" situation. It's all of us working together. Even the head office, as far as the superintendents, they're very willing to listen to ideas that we have. And from that point of view it's good.
>
> They like to keep in touch. It's so different because Jack, the superintendent, for example, will walk down the hall and many kids will stop and talk with him and know him and to me that's just amazing. So when he comes into the classroom, they don't freeze up.
>
> I feel it's very little us against them. I do really feel that they're there to try and help you. I think our central office is very pro-teacher, too, as opposed to being pro-board. And in that way I feel very respected.

Theme 3: Major Issues in Evaluation According to Teachers

Critique of Drop-in

Those who see evaluation as professional development want more in-depth, consultative evaluation where both sides participate as full-fledged professional partners.

> When I was first here, and I was new, and I think the personality of the superintendent who was then assistant superintendent, his visit to my class was so mild, so pleasant, and his report was so flattering, that I guess I would be one of the people who'd say at that time I thought the drop-in was fine. And I have said that in the past. But, you know, I'm now further along and I think differently and I don't feel that that's right. That's why I like this clinical supervision so much because that would give me some control over being able to say "This is what I'm attempting to do."
>
> Definitely cut out the surprise arrival at the door. I would say definitely cut out the attempt to write a global evaluation after two visits that's final.
>
> I would say the majority of teachers dislike the drop-in. I think they would dislike something else more, though. And that is the evaluator who says "I'm coming to see you Monday." And they don't show up. And this happens. I know in the school that I was in, that happened a lot. And I'm not sure—I wouldn't want to allocate blame, because I'm not sure what it is a function of. A lack of administration time, maybe. I don't know. Lack of good planning, but it's certainly something. I know there were four teachers in that school that were extremely stressed out.
>
> Although I know of one teacher who at any given time can recognize all the vehicles of the central office staff. And faithfully, every day, checks the parking lot! And has a window, and when she came to the school, was extremely pleased that she had a street-side window. So she could watch.
>
> I think also the type of evaluation that I felt worked better was where there was some advance notice given out. I felt that it helped the person who was being evaluated. You sometimes get someone showing up blind, and there's an intimidation factor because it takes away from possibly the approach that you want to ... you know, you're going to somebody's expectations sort of off the cuff.
>
> I would like to invite, you know? I wish I could—I guess that's not really evaluation, but I wish I could feel free to say "There's good things happening in my classes and I'd like you to come." Not just for me but to see the whole program rather than just my evaluation. But, it's unnerving, for sure. I guess, I don't know how else you could do it, I suppose.
>
> Drop in visits? I think they're the biggest disadvantage there is as a teacher. You never know what happened to the teacher the night before in terms of being prepared or unprepared for class. Sometimes that could have an effect on their particular evaluations.

Support of Drop-in

The implied feeling was that if you don't support drop-in, you have something to hide—you are not a competent teacher.

Many teachers in this group stated, explicitly and implicitly, that they did not want any more involvement than what is presently in place: "if you're not absolutely bombing out, it's a short-term pain, you'll get a good report anyway, so why sweat it? if I knew they were coming I'd feel I have to prepare."

The most common argument in support of drop-in was: "If teachers knew ahead, they'd prepare the lesson of the year—to fool the evaluator." Three interesting implications arise here: (a) the purpose of evaluation is to check up on teachers; (b) They ordinarily do not teach as well as when they are performing for the evaluator; and (c) teachers have to be monitored even in terms of the basics of teaching. This self-conscious image of themselves as teachers appears to be at odds with the image of the teacher as a professional who takes personal responsibility and initiative not only to be proficient at the basics, but also for such things as innovative approaches and responsiveness to student needs.

It is apparently not unusual for teachers to think of themselves as employees who have something to hide and of evaluators as people charged with the responsibility of discovering what they are hiding. Schlechty (1991) describes this attitude as a teacher phenomenon:

> One of the unfortunate consequences of what I have elsewhere referred to as the "bias of educators toward individualistic explanation" (the tendency to attribute the cause of all events to individual actions) is that educators have been much more attentive to the evaluation of performers than they have to performance itself. It is commonplace for educators to speak of improvement-oriented evaluations, *but in practice most educators view evaluation as a punitive tool used to demonstrate who is inadequate at doing what. (p. 2112)*

> I guess it's probably the best way in that they're getting a sampling of classes at random because if you knew in advance that they were coming then I suppose it's got advantages because then you can prepare in the best way. But I think it's more of a truer reflection of how you're doing, or what your teaching style is like and if you prepare for something and you do your best lesson well then and you know that, for example, someone is coming in to evaluate you, then you might not have any areas that really are showing that you need improvement.

> The administration from the office just pops in. I guess that would be good. I guess it would give you a truer representation. You know? "Is she ready all the time?" Not to make up a lesson of the year. I don't think—I wouldn't ever have it "I'm coming on Thursday, period six." Because let's face it, any teacher's going to make the lesson of a year for that one day on period six. I think most would. And why not? You don't ever even get a true representation. Once they were in there, I wouldn't walk out and get a coffee and walk back in. Which I've done! "You guys get going on that and I'll go get my coffee and I'll be right back." You wouldn't do that.

> I think most of time he just dropped in. Which is good, because then you're not preplanning for an evaluation. He can see on a day-to-day basis what you're doing, without my taking the entire night to make sure it's the perfect lesson. Whereas it's the way I'm teaching every day. And that is good. Because even though I don't think you would plan to do that, you would, just because it is an evaluation.

> Oh, the drop-in doesn't bother me. In fact, I'd rather. Because then I sleep the night before! If I knew somebody was coming, I would be paranoid, you know? I'd rather see them at my door and say "Come on in."

> I think the drop-in process is the best for evaluation. Oh, definitely. I mean, I can be so—you know, you can prepare and prepare and prepare and have the best lesson in the world if you know in advance that this is coming. But that's not an evaluation of your overall teaching skills. I don't know, maybe it's an incentive for everybody to prepare all the time. I don't know.

Qualified Support of Drop-in

The supporting arguments are similar to those of the supporters: "Central office has the right to do this; drop-in prevents canned lessons," *but* this group had reservations in cases of beginning teachers. They suggested that more professional development and follow-up is needed and that the drop-in approach might add more anxiety.

> It seems to me that being a first-year teacher that you're on the spot when they come in. So it's hard to get another impression, if your mind is just racing. Because you're kind of there for your next year's contract and you're on a firing line here, so to speak, so ... Sometimes it's a shock because you don't know. They just show up and they walk in, which is good too. But also at times it's better if they were announcing their presence even the day before.... Then I think the pressure comes off a little bit if they don't just show up. It's just like kind of a shock for a few minutes.

> If I wanted someone to come in and view me because I felt "Well, I wonder if I could improve on this area some way?" If I could encourage them to come and view me and give me some feedback on that, then perhaps I would want to know when they were coming and I could set my lesson up with that in mind and then get that specific feedback. But because the system isn't set up that way, where I'm approaching them to come in to view me that way, to me, I don't see an advantage in having them set a date.

> They came in and said "Guess what" but I don't know. I'm okay with it now. I didn't used to be. It used to be quite a frightening thing.

Should Evaluators be Subject Specialists?

The overwhelming response to this question was *Yes!* In addition to subject area expertise, teachers also identified considerable teaching experience as a requirement. About half the teachers said that evaluation training is needed also. The exception were two people who said that subject expertise was not important as long as the evaluator had vast and varied teaching and evaluative experience.

> Maybe trying to get people who are in your subject area would be good. You know? Sort of, this person is sort of language, this person is sort of math—someone who has an idea. Perhaps someone who's been in the classroom recently, too. But unfortunately you don't get that "Excuse me, when was the last time you were in a junior high class-

> room with 28 grade 8s?" Well, you kind of go "Sure. I really think your comments are valid!"
>
> You know, the constraints that are on their time are not something that I can gauge. And I'm certainly not prepared to judge it. One aspect that I judge really harshly is people coming in to evaluate things they know nothing about. I think it's dangerous and it's something if you were a teacher who deeply cared about the outcome of evaluation or you didn't have a continuous contract and it could impact your career, I think that's probably the most unprofessional thing that could ever happen.
>
> Teachers don't like people who are not clear in, I wouldn't say experts but, knowledgeable about the field. I think that they really despise that. I know they do. And it creates a lack of trust and a lack of respect that I think is really dangerous.
>
> I think so. They should, they don't need an in-depth knowledge but they should know whether you know what you're talking about, first of all, I guess. But that would be a minor thing. Most of what they're evaluating is delivery and effectiveness and control and things like that.
>
> I think teaching experience is important. I think you have to be there to appreciate it. You can't do a job as a war correspondent from an office in a neutral country. I think to get the flavor of things, you have to have been there. And you have to, I think, have observed several different teaching styles. Everyone doesn't teach like you do and your method isn't the only way. There's some teachers that are effective and teach at a higher noise level than is good for me, but if good things come out of it, that's fine.
>
> I don't really think it matters because the process of teaching doesn't change that much with the subject area. You know, there's certain mechanics in teaching that work. Or that most teachers follow.
>
> Well, they've got to be master teachers themselves. There's no doubt about that. I think they should have to have a lot of teaching experience before they can be qualified to evaluate someone else. I wouldn't want somebody straight out of university evaluating me. I'll tell you that right now! That would make me nervous!
>
> I remember one time I was evaluated by someone who did not really have any background in my field. My area. And they were teaching a very concrete subject and I was teaching a very abstract subject. Now, it's not that they made any terribly negative comments, but some of their suggestions I felt were inappropriate.
>
> I think prior teaching experience is essential. Now, if you've been teaching with only very small class groups, to come into a class of 33 or 34 sometimes I feel is a little unrealistic as, the advice. Now that's not something I've experienced, but it's something I would comment on.
>
> I really don't like being evaluated by someone who is not of my subject area. Knows nothing about the field I'm teaching. Maybe taught it a way back in grade 1 or something, but they have a great deal of trouble then, trying to kind of relate or give me some constructive criticism or even discuss the areas that I'm dealing with. And also, the general trend sometimes is in administration to go to guidance people, and a lot of times these people who are evaluating you have never had a classroom larger than five.
>
> I'd kind of like to see more—I don't know how they'd do it, but more specialists come in. You know, to give you more helpful suggestions.

Theme 4: Teachers' Suggestions

Teachers' Suggestions for Improvement/Changes in the Process

The pro-drop-ins were quite emphatic supporters of the status quo: "don't change anything," "this is ideal." The anti-drop-ins made numerous suggestions for integrating evaluation and professional development.

> I think maybe announcing that they're coming in, just the day before, say "We're going to come by" so that you can maybe it's being more prepared or, just not so tense and nervous over the fact that they're all of a sudden jumping into your class.
>
> To be there more than just one period, because one period I don't think is a good evaluation of your teaching ability.
>
> Maybe the answer is having outside people being hired, like consultants almost, to do the evaluation. Let the administrators administrate.
>
> I think in the scheme of things, they [central office administrators] don't need to come in unless things are getting tough. I know that if somebody's just not meant to be a teacher, I suppose, you know. And I think people are getting pretty good at it these days, to counsel people out of teaching. I think if the superintendent is in love with the idea of teaching, and he wanted to come in and observe a number of teachers, that would be appropriate too. But other than trying to sort of really get tough with somebody who shouldn't be a teacher, I don't see the need for the method that's used.
>
> I think the way it is right now is probably as close to the ideal as you can get.
>
> It would be like, what I want is more of a professional development type evaluation. Rather than an evaluation just for the sense that they're using it now. To evaluate my teaching.
>
> I'd like to see the administration in the school do a lot more of it. But it's the time! There's just no time. But they've got a better feel for what's going on in the whole school than somebody from central office coming over and doing it. I think that would be ideal. But it's just not practical. And I would like to see it done yearly, but again, the same thing. I went for six years, I think, without anybody coming in.

Summary Notes

The role of the teacher was not defined by the junior high school teachers directly, but came out through answers to the questions on the purpose of evaluation as defined by teachers and the relationship between teacher and student performance.

How teachers thought about themselves was closely related to how they defined teacher evaluation. The anti-drop-ins defined evaluation as professional development. They therefore described the role of the teacher as subject specialist, professional, and autonomous adult who should not be patronized. They considered peer supervision to be a meaningful process. They also advocated that the *relationship with administrators* should be one of partnership.

The pro-drop-ins defined evaluation as an accountability check, a necessary process to ensure that teachers are doing their job. The teacher was described as an employee who should know the subject area, but needs help with teaching skills. The relationship with central office was described as employer-employee, whereby the central office administrator is there to help, almost like a father figure.

Raintree Elementary School

Background Information

The school has 24 teachers including a principal and one vice-principal. There is a wide range of teacher experience (1-24+ years). Teacher turnover is low and approximately 80% of the teachers have worked in this school district only. There is a view that this is a special school in the county that attracts teachers from other schools.

Administrator's Story

Dick Magnusson: Principal

Dick indicated that there was no training in the beginning for principals to conduct the teacher evaluations. However, he personally did not have any problems as he has a graduate degree with a major in clinical supervision. As far as he could determine the impact of the policy on his school was negligible.

He has one vice-principal who shares the evaluation load. Dick utilizes a team approach with his vice-principal. Who will evaluate whom is decided at the beginning of the year with each carrying an equal load, which is not onerous because of the low turnover of teachers in the school. He noted that according to the policy all new teachers are evaluated in their first year and the other teachers are evaluated every three years. Consequently, eight teachers will be evaluated this year.

The process is started with a preconference with each teacher and they set the time for the observations (a minimum of four over two weeks). However, for a variety of reasons it is difficult to adhere to the schedule. He recognizes the problem of time constraints and indicated that not everyone has a minimum of four observations. But regardless of how many observations occur, he looks for good things.

When the evaluations are completed the principal and the vice-principal share evaluations prior to the postconference interview with the teachers. The teacher is then provided with a rough draft of the report and he sits and discusses it with the individual before writing the formalized report. When the formal report is submitted to the individual, if she or he is not satisfied there is an appeal process available and he has reworded part of an evaluation report as a result of an appeal. Although this was how he conducted the teacher evaluations, he noted that not everyone pursued the same procedures and he has noticed differences among administrators.

He is strongly supportive of evaluation activities and noted that he evaluates the support staff as well. The evaluation policy also extends to principals, and he was evaluated by the superintendent last year.

He sees his leadership style as consensus building. Staff meetings are for decision making and he works toward ownership by the teachers. He says that the teachers have ownership of the teacher evaluation process. He sees his role as a facilitator and allows for risk taking.

He thinks an ideal teacher should be innovative, well-organized, punctual, and set a good example for students that contributes to the hidden curriculum. The ideal teacher is also a team player, a giver, and enjoys children. He looks for a student-centered approach in teaching and looks for children involved in many activities.

He describes his school as having an active public relations program with an informal parents' advisory committee that meets fairly regularly for information purposes. There is an open-door policy at his school, and he sees the school providing a positive contribution to the community as indicated by the many positive comments from parents.

When asked to explain how student input is used in the evaluation process, he indicated that he observes students and assesses their feedback to the teacher, looks at examples of students' work, and focuses on what students have done. He made a big point that he looks at the classroom walls for students' work. He downgrades teachers who use "fancy posters."

When asked about board participation, Dick described the process of the board or administration workshops and the "think tanks" that bring forward recommendations for the coming year. The description he gave of the process was essentially the same as the deputy superintendent's description.

Jean Fisher: Vice-Principal

Although her views are essentially the same as the principal's and she is highly supportive of the team approach, Jean sees her role slightly differently. She sees her role as a facilitator rather than an evaluator and takes a positive approach of providing assistance when teachers are having difficulties. She feels that it is important to get to know each other. This belief is supported in her perception of herself as a networker among teachers in the school.

She also noted that she does her homework. When she had to evaluate a first-year special education teacher, she talked to friends in special education. She recognized that there is a different nature of a special education classroom but she found it a good experience.

According to Jean, who came from another school district three years ago, the evaluation procedures have been successful because of the exceptional superintendent in this district. His role in implementation is excellent because he evaluates principals and vice-principals as well, which is in keeping with the whole philosophy of feedback and dual ownership. She is willing to try things because of the strong sense of trust in him.

Her ideal teacher is a strongly student-centered person who is open to growing with their children. The ideal teacher is also one who is a learner as well and reflective in practice.

Teachers' Stories

The elementary teachers are quite divided in their perceptions of the evaluation policy, both in the purposes and the impact. Most take the process seriously: "I think that teachers need to be evaluated." However, a few others indicate that they do not take the procedure seriously. One suggested "I don't think anybody takes it too seriously." But most feel that it is "integral part of becoming a new teacher." Those who have experienced difficulty found the process especially helpful and fair, as noted by one individual: "I know the time I had some problems, he didn't write up the final letter until he helped me out."

Not only are the teachers divided in their beliefs about the policy, but also on their personal experiences. Although most are positive or neutral about the process, for some the process is stressful for a variety of personal reasons and/or organizational reasons.

The majority would not recommend eliminating the evaluations, but they have a variety of recommendations for improving the process.

Analysis

Knowledge of the Policy

Although most of the teachers were aware of the existence of the policy handbook and the section on teacher evaluation, few teachers had any understanding of the intent of the teacher education policy at either the provincial or local level. As would be expected the new teachers were aware that they would be evaluated, as expressed in the following:

> I was not aware of such a policy when I first came on staff, but I was aware of the existence of the county policy handbook. However, as a result of my university experience I did expect evaluations to occur.

Of those that did, they pointed out the unrealistic aspects of the policy, for example, "the need for a tidy classroom" because the expectation may not fit with observed activities. Some suggested that the physical environment should not be part of the evaluation. They also considered it unrealistic to evaluate teachers on the basis of "neatness of student work and dress." The degree of lesson planning, according to the handbook, was also considered unrealistic. In general, teachers felt that they did not have time to read the handbook and put this task as a low priority in comparison with other duties.

Purpose of the Policy

Although the majority were aware of the purpose of the policy, many had not read the policy manual and were not aware of the specifics on which they would be evaluated. A few had read the policy as a result of this study.

The teachers varied in their opinions on the purpose of the policy. However, the majority described the purpose of the policy in terms of accountability. Other purposes noted would fall under the categories of personal development and public relations. Under accountability the teachers describe the purpose as the principal making sure "that we are doing the right thing," "doing my job," "doing a capable job," and "keeping people from being dead wood." One individual described it as "He knows what is going on behind closed doors." Others were more specific and stated "being held accountable for what you are doing in teaching the curriculum," and "checking to make sure people are following the curriculum and teaching what they should be teaching." This view is captured in the following:

> I expect the administration to come in to view what I am doing in my classroom or discuss with me what I am doing in my classroom for the specific grade that I am working at and at that particular time and being evaluated on one of those components.

The teachers also see the purpose of the policy to determine personal and professional competency. It is a "means to check classroom discipline and control and the teacher's rapport with the students," and much more:

> Teacher evaluation for the interviewee is equated with the task of observing staff to determine their pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses. It includes teaching styles, teaching methods, as well as curriculum content of their lessons.

The policy statements are seen as "guidelines for monitoring effectiveness" and "judging how effective you are." The purpose is seen as ensuring that teachers will be working with quality people

> to ensure that they have the appropriate background and knowledge base and teaching styles in order for them to be an effective teacher in order to avoid the possibility of becoming deadwood teachers. Evaluation serves to force teachers out of their ruts and to consider different approaches.

Some teachers, approximately a third, identified public relations as being one of the purposes of evaluation. This view is captured in the following responses:

> in the public's opinion that maybe some teachers are falling down in some areas and so we need to be able to talk to these people and say that we evaluate teachers and they are not falling down in these areas.

> to placate the public who may view the profession as falling down in some areas.

> brings out the good points of teachers in response to the public's concerns about slipping teaching standards.

Individuals often gave more than one response to the question on the purpose of the policy. In addition to monitoring for effectiveness they saw the evaluations as an opportunity for "personal improvement" and "improvement in teaching strategies" through "feedback on performance."

A few described the purpose from a more personal perspective of reward and praise as a "pat on the back" and "warm fuzzies" or as "letting me know the expectations of employment."

The Process

Teachers can be divided into three categories in terms of the usefulness of the evaluations. The first group of individuals, who speak positively of the experience, are teachers who experienced difficulty of some type in the classroom. They describe the process "as one of assistance and support." Teachers were allowed to choose the time and subjects for observation and after each lesson there was a beneficial discussion with useful suggestions. One teacher said:

> He would give me all kinds of suggestions and then I would try it and he would come back in a week or whenever and he would say "Well how is this part going? How is this going?" And then he would watch the class, watch me teach, and he would say, "This really helps in the area." or "Maybe you could try this in this area." He was really good.

The teachers indicated that visits, the series of recommendations, and the follow-up visits to discuss the success of their implementation as well as to offer additional support helped them to survive. They spoke highly of all the assistance that they were provided.

Other teachers who were not in difficulty also spoke positively of the involvement of the main office administration in the evaluation process:

> And so is the superintendent. They're both great but they have definitely been of help.... They have a nice way of doing it. I've always enjoyed them when they come. You know you are going to get some help and some positive feedback rather than negative. They are both really good that way.

> The deputy superintendent is really involved in what goes on in the classroom. The superintendent looks more for how your rapport is with kids in the classroom, classroom atmosphere. What are your discipline methods, rather than what you are teaching. What is the content. He definitely looks more at that but I think that is just the kind of person he is. The other one is too, but he looks for "Are the children learning? Are they getting the message?" I think they are all pretty consistent in the things they look for.

Another group of teachers see the process as an opportunity for feedback, both positive reinforcement of the things that they did and suggestions for improvement or assistance if help was required in certain areas. They "read over and over the parts that they like and if there is a weakness" they act on it.

The third group of teachers see the evaluations as a pro forma activity. The evaluations are held in little regard and are viewed of being of limited value or are seen as warm fuzzies. It is something that has to be done and so they do their performance. In their words "You teach for what you think they want to see."

The Product

When teachers were asked to describe the end product of the evaluation, most of the comments were neutral or negative. The letter is generally described as a running history of the whole lesson describing what went on. The word *trivial* was used extensively in such comments as: trivial comments, trivializes the lesson observed, trivial to the point of inappropriateness, trivial and nitpicking. A couple suggested that they were not only trivial but inaccurate because they described something that never happened. However, the product may be evolving. An individual who was evaluated within the last two years noted:

> In general up until my last one, I keep saying my last one because I thought that was the most thorough and the best one, and that was a whole variety of different things. In the written letter, it talked about everything from my physical setup of my room to the programs I'm running to student participation to whole kind of ... It was very

> thorough. In the past I, I just felt like it was simply observations and no, you know, you did this and then you did that and this many students and not too much as far as feedback ... and then his interpretations and comments about how he felt about my teaching was in there as well which I think is far more valuable than just telling me what I did, because I know what I did.

When asked the disposition of the letters, teachers generally said that they read the good part over but then filed the letter away for no future purpose except possibly for job references. When asked what they thought central office did with the files they noted: "I just think they sit in the file. I really do."

The Ideal Teacher

Because the policy handbook places heavy emphasis on the characteristics of good teaching, the teachers were asked to describe the ideal teacher. They generally noted that teachers had to be competent, knowledgeable, and have good classroom management skills. However, only two focused solely on professional skills, or teachers as technocrats. The other focused more heavily on what could be described as interpersonal skills related to students. The following words and phrases demonstrate this theme: caring, patient, friendly, helpful, approachable, warm, compassionate, empathy, good rapport, respect for children, and sensitive to student needs. However, it was felt that an evaluation would be unable to fully address ideal teacher characteristics.

Teachers' Preference

The first issue addressed by teachers was announced versus unannounced visits. The majority prefer the visits to be announced especially to prevent an inappropriate visit, for example, test giving, showing film, and so forth. But a couple "prefer not to be all worked up about it and try to be something I'm not."

They would like to keep the pre- and postconference but note that the process needs to be improved. Preconferencing is considered important for many teachers but especially for first-year teachers who may feel threatened by the situation. They believe that it is "good to discuss things beforehand on what kind of things they [administration] are going to be looking for and to allow the teacher an opportunity to say what they want the observer to look for." They suggest that it could be a more collaborative experience to help alleviate teachers' apprehensions and make it more of a learning experience.

> To help me with what I am doing, whether or not it's my questioning technique, and so forth.
>
> Where I am at and what I need help in is what I want to be evaluated on.

The teachers would also like more time spent on the postconference with discussion of constructive aspects that will help them improve their teaching. The scheduling of the postconference also needs to be examined. The teachers would prefer that it not occur during their prep or lunch time.

In terms of the evaluation team, the teachers would like to see more visibility of administrators, but in nonformal ways in order to "get a clearer picture." Some suggested that senior administrators were not qualified to evaluate their activities "because they haven't been in classrooms and they really don't know how things function, and it's different today." Some would prefer "someone who has taught that grade or similar grade for a while." However, when asked if they would prefer peer evaluators, the majority said No, because they could be "too blunt and honest," because it could be "too risky for reasons of position and personality," and because of "potential conflict with the ATA code of ethics." The two positions would appear to be contradictory. Perhaps what they are saying is that they would like to work with another teacher but not one in their own school.

In general the teachers would like to make the process and the product more meaningful to them. Besides the above suggestions for improving the process, they suggest that the letter contain constructive recommendations with a time frame for a follow-up.

Data Analysis

Emergent Themes

A number of themes emerged in the comparison of the site-specific themes of the two case studies. Although there are a number of shared themes across the two school levels, it is quite clear that teachers at the elementary school tell different stories about evaluation than teachers at the junior high school. The following is the analysis of the themes.

Theme 1: The Evaluation Model as Described by Central Office and Teachers

The school district uses a school resource team model with the responsibility for supervision and evaluation resting primarily with the principals, and this model is line with the basic philosophy expressed by central office.

Agreement in both schools. Teachers generally agree that central office wants to be supportive. Some teachers at both levels also admitted to a great degree of anxiety about evaluations (some of the support for the drop-in practice stemmed from this—"I'd rather not know when they're coming").

Mentioned in one site only. Some teachers at junior high agreed that evaluation is not used to intimidate or manipulate teachers by central office, but sometimes is used that way by school administrators (examples

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given, however, referred to other schools, not the junior high).

Theme 2: Awareness of Policy
Agreement in both schools. Although most of the teachers were aware of the existence of the policy handbook and the section on teacher evaluation, many had not read the policy and were not aware of the specifics on which they would be evaluated. Few teachers had any understanding of the intent of the teacher evaluation policy either at the provincial or local level. New teachers expected to be evaluated.

Mentioned in one site only. At the junior high, *only those who disagreed with their evaluation* made a point of looking up the policy.

Theme 3: Reactions to Drop-in Visits
Teachers from both schools could be categorized as for or against drop-in visits. Their reaction to this issue had implications for their orientation toward the rest of the issues. Although over half of the teachers at the junior high level support drop-in visits to some degree, few support drop-in at the elementary level.

Agreement in both schools. Those at the junior high level who see evaluation as professional development, want more in-depth, consultative evaluation where both sides participate as full-fledged professional partners.

The majority of elementary teachers prefer the visits to be announced especially to prevent an inappropriate visit (test, movie); preconference is deemed important for first-year teachers.

About a third of the junior high teachers and the small minority at the elementary level support the drop-in for the following reasons:

Don't want any more involvement than what's presently in place—if you're not absolutely bombing out, it's a short-term pain, you'll get a good report anyway so why sweat it? If I knew they were coming I'd feel I have to prepare.
Most popular argument: If teachers knew ahead, they'd prepare the lesson of the year—to fool the evaluator.
Undue stress was also mentioned by some teachers.

A couple of elementary teachers prefer "not to be all worked up about it and be something I am not."

Mentioned in one site only. At the junior high there is a group of "qualified supporters" of drop-in. Their arguments are as follows:

Central office has the right to do this; same argument as above about canned lessons, but some expressed reservations in cases of beginning teachers for whom more professional development and follow up needed, drop-in might add more anxiety.

Theme 4: The Purpose of Evaluation
In general, the teachers at the junior high school level were not aware of the school district's policy on evaluation. They speculated that it was for accountability to Alberta Education and the taxpayers. Teachers who were supportive of the drop-in policy felt that the purpose was to check on them, particularly on the teaching process, and to give them positive feedback. The teachers at the elementary level followed this same pattern based upon their beliefs about drop-in visits. However, because the elementary teachers are mostly against drop-in visits, they included staff development as a major purpose of evaluation in contrast to the junior high teachers.

One of the major purposes of evaluation as stated by central office is to help first-year teachers and teachers identified as at risk. This purpose, and support for the purpose, is strongly acknowledged by the elementary teachers. Although the junior high teachers also recognize this purpose, they see this as part of central office's larger accountability function of ensuring that an appropriate level of teaching performance is maintained.

Agreement in both schools. The junior high teachers did not know the purpose but were making assumptions or guesses about the overall purpose:

Anti-drop-ins suggested accountability to Alberta Ed and taxpayers (they say this is what is, but professional development is what it should be.)

Pro-drop-ins thought the purpose was to support teachers, to give positive feedback, to check up on them—particularly on process—for example, class control (right of the employer); to keep their finger on the pulse—know what's going on.

Positive reinforcement was mentioned by teachers in the junior high school; Similarly, a few people in the elementary school also mentioned: reward and praise, "pat on the back, warm fuzzies, letting me know the expectations of employment."

The elementary teachers saw accountability as the basal component of evaluation, but add other aspects beyond it:

"that we are doing the right thing, doing my job, doing a capable job, keeping people from being dead wood."

The teachers also saw the purpose of the policy to determine personal and professional competence. It is a "means to check classroom discipline and control and the teacher's rapport with the students."

Appearing on one site only. At the junior high, the majority of teachers (both pro- and anti-drop-in supporters) expressed a major complaint: "We don't really know what their purpose is! Why are you here today?"

At the elementary level, some (approximately a third) teachers identified public relations as being one of the purposes of evaluation.

Differing opinions between sites. Some elementary teachers, in addition to monitoring for effectiveness, saw the evaluations as an opportunity for personal improvement and improvement in teaching strategies through feedback on performance. (Only a few mentioned this at the junior high.) The pro-drop-ins, in fact, claimed that the evaluations did not offer such an opportunity.

Theme 5: The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher never came out clearly at the junior high level. Common terms were provided, such as *facilitator of learning*, but a deeper analysis indicated that once again, teachers' views were related to the drop-in visit dichotomy. For the anti-drop-ins, the role of the teacher is being a subject specialist and a professional, thinking adult to whom the *teaching as professional judgment* metaphor could be applied. In accordance with this vision of themselves, the anti-drop-ins saw evaluation as *professional development, to be able to try new ideas and consult with other knowledgeable professionals.* The pro-drop-ins consistently described their role in terms of technical expertise (knowledge of subject and teaching process), and their view of evaluation purposes, accordingly, was *accountability; it's their right as employer, everybody needs to be checked up on, they are accountable to greater powers.*

Teachers at the elementary also provided common terms such as *facilitator of learning* but presented the notions as taken for granted as being part and parcel of being a professional. Instead, they focused more on the interpersonal skills and relationships with students.

Agreement in both schools. There was general agreement among all teachers that teachers had to be competent, knowledgeable, with good class management skills. Only two elementary teachers focused *solely* on professional skills or teachers as technocrats. The numbers at the junior high were higher (consistent with numbers of pro-drop-ins).

Mentioned in one site only. The issue of the relationship between teacher and student performance became the proxy definition of the role of the teacher: most talked about facilitator of learning: I present the stuff, but the responsibility for learning is with the student; teachers should not be evaluated on the basis of student performance.

Differing opinions between sites. The other elementary teachers focused more heavily on interpersonal skills related to students: caring, patient, compassionate, friendly, helpful, warm, approachable, empathetic, respects children, and sensitive to student needs. These skills were not mentioned by the junior high teachers, who stressed instead the professional skills of discipline, class management, and so forth.

In general, the elementary teachers fit the teaching as professional judgment metaphor. Their responses indicate that teachers "must master a body of theoretical knowledge as well as range of techniques" (Wise et al., 1985, p. 65). They prefer evaluation to be collaborative, with their practices assessed in context. They want to improve and believe that improvement comes about "when the process focuses on what classroom life is really like and when they are able to interact with more than one person, especially peers."

Theme 6: Usefulness of Evaluation Process and Product

In general, elementary teachers spoke positively of the evaluation process. Those who saw it as a pro forma activity were again those individuals who could be categorized as supporters of drop-in visits. Teachers in both schools commented on the friendly manner of the superintendent and the helpfulness of the deputy superintendent. Several teachers at both schools noted that there was too long a period between the evaluation and the evaluation report. The letter was described variously as benign, irrelevant, complimentary but without anything specific.

Agreement in both schools. A group of teachers at both levels did find the evaluation and feedback useful: Some junior high teachers recalled their rookie years when they received useful suggestions, especially from the deputy superintendent. Elementary teachers who experienced difficulty of some type in the classroom also mentioned "assistance and support" and praised the superintendent and deputy superintendent.

The third group of elementary teachers see the evaluations as a pro forma activity. The evaluations are held in little regard and are viewed as being of limited value or are seen as warm fuzzies. It is something that has to be done and so they do their performance. In their words, "you teach for what you think they want to see." A number of junior high teachers also found the reports "nice" because they made them feel good.

Another group of elementary teachers see the process as an opportunity for feedback, both positive reinforcement of things that they did well and suggestions for improvement or assistance if help was required in certain areas. They "read over and over the parts that they like and if there is a weakness" they act upon it. The supporters of drop-in at the junior high had similar comments; the specific instances they recalled generally pertained to noncontroversial issues such as physical characteristics of the classroom. In no case were recommendations of major changes discussed by this group.

Mentioned in one site only. Some junior high school teachers found the idea that a nonsubject specialist was giving them recommendations offensive or insulting and found the evaluation report irrelevant for that reason.

What do teachers need from evaluation? Most said feedback, but this meant different things to different people, apparently depending on their disposition toward change. To some, feedback appears to mean confirmation and affirmation of the status quo (although the words they used were "pat on the back, recognition, positive feedback, compliments"). These same teachers say the present evaluation system is ideal and cannot be improved; some said that specific feedback from a peer-specialist would be interesting, but *not* on an evaluation report. Those teachers who defined evaluation as supervision/professional development, on the other hand, spoke of "trying new things, stretching themselves, being innovative, going beyond just standard competence." Such rhetoric certainly implies willingness to accept change.

Agreement between schools. At both levels, the anti-drop-ins thought postconference was inadequately done: it was too long between evaluation and the feedback was irrelevant.

Pro-drop-ins thought postconference was a pat on the back, not crucial but did not want to spend their own prep time on it.

Mentioned in one site only. At the elementary school, the evaluation letter is generally described as a running history of the whole lesson describing what went on. The word *trivial* was used extensively in such comments as: trivial comments, trivializes the lesson observed, trivial to the point of inappropriateness, trivial and nitpicking. A couple suggested they were not only trivial but inaccurate because they described something that never happened. *However, the product may be evolving.*

Teacher use of evaluation results was similar at both levels. At the junior high, it was often "file-and-forget-it," unless there were some relevant suggestions. The pro-drop-ins liked to read them for positive feedback, compliments, or as an ego boost.

The elementary teachers also surmised that central office likewise used the file-and-forget-it method. The descriptor *trivial* was used frequently in discussing the evaluation reports. The teachers generally said that they read the good parts over but then filed the letter away.

Appeal: Those junior high school teachers who disagreed with an evaluation thought the appeal procedure ineffective and it made the teacher look bad.

Theme 7: Qualifications of Evaluators

Agreement in both schools. Teachers at both schools generally agreed that they would not want the evaluator to be a peer in their school. At the junior high, the supporters of drop-in in particular were opposed to their peers having any input into their evaluation; generally they said peer input would be "nice" or "interesting" to have, but only as an informal chat, not a "real" evaluation but for "my eyes only."

The majority of elementary teachers opposed peer evaluations because they could be "too blunt and honest," "because it could be too risky for reasons of position and personality," and because of "potential conflict with the ATA code of professional conduct."

Differing opinions between sites. The exception to the general opinion on peer evaluation or supervision comes from the junior high opponents of drop-in. These teachers said they would welcome peer involvement not only in supervision, but in the subsequent development of new approaches.

Mentioned in one site only. At the junior high level, most of the teachers would prefer evaluators who are subject specialists, who have taught fairly recently, and who have considerable teaching experience. Approximately half think that evaluators should also have evaluation training. The exception were two people who said subject expertise was not important as long as the evaluator had vast and varied teaching and evaluative experience.

Teachers at the elementary level did not *strongly* support this position. Of those who did, some said they would prefer evaluators who have taught their grade. Others suggested that senior administrators were not qualified to evaluate their activities "because they haven't been in classrooms and they really don't know how things function, and it's different today."

The elementary teachers stressed somewhat more strongly than the junior high teachers that giving back a running history of what happened in the lesson was useless to teachers, because, after all, they were there too. An evaluator must be able to go well beyond that and interpret what happened in class.

Theme 8: Teachers' Suggestions for Improvement of Evaluations

At the junior high level the suggestions came largely from people who were against drop-in visits. The supporters of drop-ins at both schools feel that the process is fine the way it is. In general, teachers at the elementary level would like the drop-in visits stopped and the process changed to a collaborative professional development model.

Agreement between schools. The anti-drop-ins at the junior high level made numerous and specific suggestions for integrating evaluation and professional development including peer supervision, as mentioned above.

According to the elementary teachers, evaluation could be a more collaborative experience to help alleviate teachers' apprehensions and make it more of a learning experience. More time should be spent on postconferences with discussion of constructive aspects that will help them improve their teaching. Teachers would prefer that postconference not occur during their prep or lunch time. Some junior high pro-drop-ins said this too.

Differing opinions between schools. The pro-drop-ins at the junior high level were conspicuous by their unwavering support of the present system of evaluation. The operative phrase used was: "don't change anything, this is great, ideal."

Junior high subthemes that did not overlap with elementary school themes

The following three subthemes did not fit into the above analysis:

Image of teachers as projected by central office behavior (or "what do you think they see as the role of the teacher?)

Teachers had some difficulty defining this. Although "teachers as professionals" was the common answer; other comments included "they are supportive" and "I never really thought about it."

Teachers' experiences of specific instances

In describing routine evaluations, teachers often could not remember how many times they were evaluated, including in recent years. The anti-drop-ins often recalled specific instances of an unsatisfactory evaluation process. Both the recent and the established teachers often recalled evaluations from their rookie year(s).

Relationship between teacher and Central Office for teacher

The typical response was: "they are supportive of us—if we need materials or subs they'll provide."

The elementary equivalent of the second subtheme was interwoven throughout the interviews but did not emerge as a specific category. The other subthemes emerged as specific categories as a result of probing questions in response to some commonly expressed attitudes in the unstructured part of the interviews that were characteristic of junior high teachers. The ambivalence in the responses appears to be related to the underlying philosophical positions of the teachers, which have been labeled as "pro- and anti-drop-in" in this report.

Conclusions

A general observation that could be made about the teachers and administrators interviewed in this county is that their assessment of the evaluation practices depends on their implicit beliefs about the purpose of teacher evaluation. The interviewees in this jurisdiction generally could be classified as supporters of either evaluation as an accountability measure that compares individual performance with some implicit system-wide standards, or evaluation as supervision that enables individual professional development and provides diagnostic data for improvement as well as creativity.

The accountability view of evaluation tends to define the relationship between the teacher and evaluator as one of power and control, and compliance with the suggestions of the evaluator. The professional development view requires active involvement of the teacher in the process of diagnosis as well as in the creation of alternative approaches.

Summary

A number of themes emerged in the comparison of the specific school themes of the two case studies. Although there are a number of shared themes across the two school levels, it is quite clear that teachers at the elementary school tell different stories about evaluation than do teachers at the junior high school. The following is a global observation of the analysis of the themes presented previously.

Theme 1: The Evaluation Model

The school district uses a school resource team model, with the responsibility for supervision and evaluation resting primarily with the principals and this model is in line with the basic philosophy expressed by central office.

Theme 2: For or Against Drop-in Visits

Teachers across the two sites could be categorized as for or against drop-in visits, and the category they fell in had implications for the rest of the themes. It appears that these two groups operate from two different paradigms with different philosophical beliefs about what constitutes good teaching and appropriate evaluation. In general, the pro-drop-in teachers fit the metaphor of teaching as technical expertise and the anti-drop-in teachers fit both metaphors of teaching as art and professional judgment. Although the majority of teachers at the junior high level were pro-drop-in visits, few fell into this category at the elementary level.

Theme 3: The Purpose of Evaluation

In general, the teachers at the junior high school level were not aware of the school district's policy on evaluation. They speculated that it was for accountability to Alberta Education and the taxpayers, but teachers who were not supportive of the drop-in policy felt that the purpose was to check on them, particularly on process and to give them positive feedback. The teachers at the elementary level followed this same pattern based on their beliefs about drop-in visits. However, the elementary teachers who are mostly against drop-in visits included staff development as a major purpose of evaluation in contrast to the junior high teachers.

One of the major purposes of evaluation as stated by central office is to help first-year teachers and teachers identified as at risk. This purpose, and support for the purpose, is strongly acknowledged by the elementary teachers. Although the junior high teachers also recognize this, they do not see this as a major purpose.

Theme 4: The Role of the Teacher
The role of the teacher never came out clearly at the junior high level. The slogans were provided, such as facilitator of learning, but a deeper analysis indicated that once again, teachers' views depended on the drop-in visit dichotomy. For the anti-drop-ins, the role of the teacher is being a subject specialist and a professional, autonomous adult. Teachers at the elementary also believed that teachers should be competent and know their subject matter, but they focused more on essential interpersonal skills and relationships with students.

Theme 5: Usefulness
In general, elementary teachers spoke positively of the evaluation process. Those who saw it as a pro forma activity were again those individuals who could be categorized as pro-drop-in visits. Teachers at both schools noted that there was too long a period between the evaluation and receiving the letter, and that the letter was benign and irrelevant.

Teachers at both schools acknowledged the helpfulness of central office when they needed help and gave special kudos to one individual who went "beyond the call of duty."

Theme 6: Qualifications of Evaluators
At the junior high level, most of the teachers would prefer evaluators who are subject specialists, who have taught fairly recently, and with lots of teaching experience. Approximately half think that evaluators should have evaluation training.

Teachers at the elementary level did not strongly support this position. Some would prefer teachers who have taught their grade level but they would not like this person to be a peer in their school.

Theme 7: Suggestions
At the junior high level the suggestions came largely from people who were against drop-in visits. The supporters of drop-ins feel that the process is fine the way it is.

Teachers at the elementary would like the drop-in visits stopped and the process changed to a collaborative professional development model.

Reflections and Implications

The three major purposes of teacher evaluation as discussed by both the administration and the teachers of the County of Sunshine—accountability, professional development, and positive feedback or show of support for teachers—are all legitimate and necessary aspects of evaluation and need not be mutually exclusive as some of the interviews seemed to suggest.

The Provincial Teacher Evaluation Policy also incorporates the aspects of accountability and professional development:

3. The results of evaluations conducted by school authorities should be used to:
   a. assist the professional development of teachers
   b. develop improved measures of teacher performance;
   c. take appropriate action with respect to teachers whose performance is unacceptable;
   d. recommend teachers for permanent certification.

Accountability is a legitimate function and should be acknowledged as such. The School Act is quite clear on this responsibility both with respect to school administrators (Section 15 (h)) and the Provincial Teacher Evaluation Policy: "The responsibility for the evaluation of individual teacher performance and for the quality of teaching practice in schools, however, lies with each school authority". Aside from the legal obligations of the board with respect to contractual and certification matters, basic teaching proficiency must be ensured and central office must have a good overview of the level of teaching expertise that characterizes the system.

Teachers with problems must be identified early, most likely by school administration, for *meaningful help*. This could have some contractual implications; therefore, central office should be aware of the extent of the problems teachers may be experiencing and be able to provide help within their full range of authority such as to send the teacher on visits, to workshops or change the teacher's assignment.

For the purposes of accountability, then, the drop-in visits are useful for providing a quick read of the system.

To address the issue of professional development, however, a different approach should be taken according to the teachers from both schools who see the purpose of evaluation in this light. If central office administration intends to tie evaluation to instructor improvement and professional development, then the isolated drop-in visits are not an appropriate vehicle. Indeed, even the close communication links that school-based administrators and central office enjoy in this county cannot facilitate the connection of drop-in visits and meaningful professional development.

Professional *development* implies an ongoing process that in turn implies some shared history, continuity, and context. The evaluation visits must be embedded in an overall scheme or shared vision in order for them to make sense to all participants. Clearly, the isolated drop-in visits are out of context, and this is reflected in the differing opinions about the purpose of evaluation in the system.

Major features of the expanded evaluation format might include the following.

Differentiated Evaluation Criteria

The differentiation would reflect that at different times in a teacher's career evaluation is done for different purposes. This has implications not only for the process (who should evaluate and how), but also for the policy and legal definition of evaluation at each stage. The most obvious categories would be:

New teacher This would include neophyte teachers, teachers new to the system, and teachers on short-term contracts and teachers holding an Interim Professional Certificate. Teachers must satisfy the proficiency criterion because it is also a legal duty of central office and principals to ensure that teachers meet this basic standard. The main purpose in this case would be accountability, both in terms of certification decisions and in terms of contractual or staffing decisions. The policy for this evaluation stage would contain all the legal parameters that most teacher evaluation policies currently contain, including timelines, who evaluates, criteria, disposition of reports, and appeal procedures.

Teachers on continuing contract and permanent teachers. This would include teachers holding a Permanent Professional Certificate who satisfy the proficiency criterion. Teachers at this stage would be expected to have enough knowledge about teaching and about themselves as teachers that they could exercise leadership and initiative in working with their peers and administration toward professional development on an individual and school level.

Evaluation at this stage would have a diagnostic function in terms of needs assessment at an individual and school level. The specific context of the school each year would be a major determinant of needs and strategies to be developed by staff. Evaluation would thus be the first stage in developing a school plan, which in turn would serve as a coherent framework into which individual teachers would fit their own professional development goals and strategies. The cooperation of peers would be essential in helping each other achieve their goals.

The school planning and professional development process would have to be legitimated in policy. The evaluation of teachers in this category would thus be ongoing, but the information would be received and consumed by the teacher, unlike in category 1 where the information is used by others to make decisions about the teacher. The teacher would continue to function at category 2 unless his or her performance ceased to satisfy the proficiency criterion, in which case the administrator would identify the teacher as a candidate for category 3.

Teacher at risk. At this stage teachers no longer satisfy the proficiency criterion. Evaluation in this situation would serve initially a diagnostic function, but subsequently an accountability function. The individual would in effect reacquire probationary status. The teacher would drop out of the school-wide professional development and would undergo an intensive individual remedial process. The policy describing this category would have to include a definition of probationary status, the nature of the remedial process, and criteria for reentry into category 2.

Expanding the present system would carry its own set of implications:

the supporters of drop-in would probably oppose expansion of the evaluation process, because of their stated preference for the isolated visits, which normally require *minimal change* of them, and which really stay at the technical level and focus on teaching proficiency.

The anti-drop-ins would probably be supportive of actions that would tie evaluation to professional development. Their stated objective was to go beyond mere teaching proficiency, to try new things, and to exercise professional judgment; they also want to be treated by the administration as professional partners.

Introducing a new system that perhaps 50% of the participants oppose could be divisive and might stimulate at least passive resistance.

In order to deal with these implementation issues constructively and gain the support of the majority of the teachers, it appears that both policies, teacher evaluation and school-based professional development, would have to be implemented at the same time in a coordinated effort. Because the pro-drop-ins would be in the continuing contract teacher category, which they could consider a "safe" category, their evaluation anxiety would be reduced and they would be more open to working with their peers both on the diagnostic as well as problem solving aspects of school-based professional development.

In this scheme central office personnel could familiarize themselves with the school plan for the year and be able to exercise considerable leadership without triggering subliminal feelings of threat and anxiety among some teachers, because their visits would not focus on particular individuals, but on the school team's strategies for dealing with the problems they identified. Under this type of system, the teachers would be less afraid to say "we are having tremendous problems with this group of students" than would be the case now.

Chapter 8

A Case Study of Poplar Plains

The Poplar Plains case study is predicated on the view that teacher evaluation must be seen as a means to an end: instructional improvement and fostering of enriched learning environments in schools. It followed that we had to be concerned about the linkages between teacher evaluation on the one hand, and the effects of evaluation practices on professional development, school culture, and other aspects of school operations related to instructional improvement on the other. Our general question was: What circumstances in schools foster enriched learning environments for students? Then we asked: How do teacher evaluation practices affect such circumstances?

Two further concerns shaped our design of the case study. In our decision to *focus on exemplary schools,* we sought to penetrate beyond "contrived collegiality," a phrase Grimmett (1990) used to describe the sentiments of many professional teachers toward evaluation practices. That is to say, teachers and administrators, acting in a spirit of contrived collegiality, will engage in teacher evaluation out of a sense of obligation and duty rather than out of a belief that such activities actually nourish professional growth.

There is a guardedness associated with such relationships, a sense of "going through the motions." The individuals involved in such evaluative processes are not able to achieve the openness required for the full promise of evaluation to be achieved. There is irony here, because outside the framework of formal evaluation, in the same schools and with the same individuals, one might find true collegiality in informal encounters that directly and indirectly lead to enhanced learning environments for students. That is to say, the procedures used to implement evaluation policies may have driven underground the meaningful collegial relationships that lead to better things in the school for both staff and students.

On the other hand, we acknowledged that the polite, albeit superficial, acceptance of evaluation policies that one finds in schools where "contrived collegiality" is the order of the day may serve as a beginning point for efforts to achieve authentic collegiality.

We also were aware that policies serve symbolic or latent purposes and, to some degree teacher evaluation policies may be designed and implemented with such purposes in mind. For example, one sometimes hears policy makers or senior administrators assert that, if nothing else, teacher evaluation policies will ensure that "never again in the classrooms of Alberta will there be another James Keegstra." In the minds of these people, teacher evaluation policies are needed in order to fend off public criticism of the schools. For such people, teacher evaluation serves defensive purposes primarily and may have little to do with fostering learning environments for children and youth.

Finally, two sets of linkages were explored: (a) the vertical linkages that begin with school district policies in the higher reaches of district organization and conclude with the implementation of these policies in the schools; and (b) the horizontal linkages at the school level between evaluation policies and procedures on the one hand, and efforts to nurture a school culture focused on the improvement of learning environments on the other.

Purposes of the Case Study

1. To describe the content of teacher evaluation policies established at the school district level, and the interpretation given to it by senior administrators in the district.
2. To describe the procedures followed by senior administrators in implementing the school district teacher evaluation policy, and in monitoring the implementation of this policy at the school level.
3. To describe the plan for teacher evaluation in each of three schools: elementary, junior high, and senior high chosen on the basis of their reputation for excellence in teacher evaluation and their activity in fostering the professional development of their teaching staffs.
4. To trace the evolution of school-level evaluation policies and practices since they were first developed and implemented in 1985-1986, including changes that have resulted from changes in administrative leadership in the schools.
5. To describe the implementation of the plan, how the plan works in practice, and the receptiveness and support of the teachers to teacher evaluation.
6. To assess the effectiveness of teacher evaluation practices in helping teachers to do a better job in the classroom, including both attitudinal and behavioral effects.
7. To identify other (and perhaps unintended ways) in which the implementation of teacher evaluation policies has affected the school in terms of staff morale, teacher satisfaction, and organizational culture.

8. To explore the linkages between teacher evaluation and other relevant aspects of school operations, for example, school plan (vision statement), organizational culture, professional development, and school organization.
9. To document any personnel decisions (transfers, dismissals, reprimands, promotions, commendations) that have resulted directly from the implementation of teacher evaluation policies, and the effect these have had on teacher evaluation specifically and on overall school development. Are these perceived to be linked to evaluation practices?

Data Gathering Procedures

In the conduct of the study, both district- and school-level data were gathered.

Central Office

Data gathering at the central office level was of two kinds: interviews and document acquisition. Six senior members of the administrative staff were interviewed as follows: two members of the superintendent's staff who had been closely associated with the district's teacher evaluation policy from the time of its initial development and implementation; and four associate superintendents (including the three associate superintendents whose schools were selected for this study). These interviews were carried out by graduate students working in teams of two during late November and early December 1991.

The interviewers also gathered relevant documents: the teacher evaluation policy statements, value/belief statements, and any studies of teacher evaluation which may have been carried out in the district.

The interviews focused on the following areas:

1. procedures used in policy implementation.
2. views of senior administrators regarding the purposes and potential of the policy, and the progress to date in achieving these.
3. the role of the associate (area) superintendents in implementing the policy.
4. obstacles to implementation of the policy.
5. factors that bear on how well the policy has been implemented.
6. general assessments of each of the three schools included in the study, as well as specific assessments of teacher evaluation practices in these three schools.
7. the linkage between the district's teacher evaluation policy and the overall direction of the district.
8. descriptions of key events (personnel decisions) that have been outcomes of teacher evaluation practices in the district.
9. views on the relation of teacher evaluation policies and practices in the three schools to the overall school commitment to professional development and instructional improvement.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

The Schools

Three schools were selected for participation in the study by the senior administration of Poplar Plains Public School District, according to the cooperative research policies of the school district and the University. The proposal prepared by the researchers as a basis for gaining entry to the schools asked for schools "with a reputation for excellence in nurturing the professional development of teachers." The three site visits were carried out in late November and early December 1991.

The site visits provided an opportunity to tour each of the three schools selected for the study, to collect documents relevant to the evaluation procedures used in the school, and to conduct the interviews. The three project coordinators participated in all three site visits, with each coordinator taking major responsibility for site visit arrangements at one of the three schools.

In each of the schools, the research proposal was presented and discussed during a staff meeting, at which time teachers were invited to participate in interviews. Principals were given the task of scheduling the interviews, all of which were conducted during regular teaching hours. To ensure that a balanced cross-section of the teaching staff was included in the interview sample, we asked that in developing the schedule principals consider such criteria as number of years in the school, number of years of teaching experience, and teaching area. In each of the three schools, more than half of the professional staff were interviewed. With the permission of the interviewees, the interviews were tape-recorded, with a single exception. One senior high school teacher asked that her remarks not be tape-recorded.

Before leaving each school, the three interviewers met to share impressions gathered during the site visit and to agree on the key generalizations that emerged during the interviews. The audiotapes of the interviews were summarized by each interviewer, who also provided verbatim accounts of key points made by the various interviewees. The notes made on all the interviews at a given school were then transferred to the project coordinator responsible for preparing the report on teacher evaluation at that school.

The initial drafts of the school reports were discussed at meetings of the project team and revised accordingly.

Each draft school report was then sent to the principal of the school for review for purposes of gathering feedback from the principal (and in two cases from other members of the staff). The school reports were then revised to take account of these comments.

Organization of the Report

Following this introduction to the report, we present the school district context for teacher evaluation policies and practices. This is followed by the three school reports, in each of which the approach to teacher evaluation is described and discussed from the perspectives of both the teachers and the school administrators.

In the concluding section of the report, we present the principal themes emerging from the data gathered in this study, which taken together summarize and explain the impact of teacher evaluation in these three schools.

The District Context

The Poplar Plains School District is a large school district with evidence of vertical decentralization; decision making was shifted down the hierarchy to the schools, which have control over personnel, equipment, maintenance, and supplies.

It is important to note that the Poplar Plains decentralization model is organizational and not political, as has since been implemented in parts of the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand (Caldwell, 1990). The model is based on two critical beliefs: one, that school level personnel are competent to make decisions involving resources, and two, that they are trustworthy. School-based budgeting and decision-making has given principals and school staff more control over how they do their work; they are also more accountable for the results they achieve.

Policy Implementation

The organizational model has had a profound impact on the district's policy implementation practices. Congruent with the district management philosophy, schools are responsible to the central office primarily for their results, and for adhering to district policies. District policies set the general direction for schools but leave most of the process and procedures to be decided at the local level. In practice, schools are able to implement policies in ways that match the context of the school, as long as the intent of the district policy is adhered to.

Implementation of the Evaluation Policy

One ramification of this type of organizational model is that school administrators have been given responsibility for the evaluation of their staff; principals, teachers, and support staff are responsible for achieving the best results possible for their students, and for achieving district goals. Each principal, in consultation with staff, has been charged with developing teacher evaluation procedures that meet the needs of the school and that are consistent with the intent of the policy.

Implementation of the district policy became the responsibility of each principal as this was largely a matter of developing and implementing specific school procedures that would be consistent with several key policy requirements: (a) evaluations were to be conducted at least once a year that were to result in a report; (b) each staff member would be evaluated by his or her immediate supervisor; and (c) evaluations were to be based on how well expected outcomes have been achieved (the outcomes are defined and determined by each supervisor in consultation with staff). Monitoring entails checking that every employee has received a report from his or her immediate supervisor.

The Poplar Plains District Evaluation Policy and Procedures

In 1983, Alberta Education initiated the Management and Finance Plan, intending "to convert the Department's approach to the management of the provincial system from regulations-based to policy-based, and to simplify funding" (Bohac, 1989, p. 1). Integral to the Plan was an increased emphasis on evaluation, including teacher evaluation.

When in 1984 Alberta Education issued a mandate requiring all school jurisdictions to have a teacher evaluation policy in place, the Poplar Plains School Board was in the process of developing a new policy for the evaluation of all staff. This policy was intended to bring evaluation into line with the management philosophy of decentralization. The policy statement read:

> The performance of each staff member will be evaluated by the immediate supervisor to maintain and improve educational service provided to the students of the district. A written performance evaluation report based on how well the expected outcomes have been achieved will be provided to the staff member at least once a year.

In this school system, *staff members* are defined as all personnel working for the system, including support staff, custodial staff, and superintendents themselves. According to the policy, every employee is entitled to receive at least one formal evaluation a year. One superintendent reported that from the start evaluators were encouraged to "stay away from the preparation of forms or checklists," but generally, responsibility for conducting the evaluations was left to the individual responsible at each level, the immediate supervisor.

The notion of entitlement is relevant. One veteran superintendent had cause to reflect back on his own career: "I've been with the district for 30 years and when I look back on those early years, [feedback] was negligible." This person also recalled hearing a teacher say that she was hungry for [feedback]. He remembered hearing the chief superintendent report that working with another individual and receiving feedback was the "most meaningful experience he'd had happen up to that point in time in [his] career." It is evident that there are those in the district who believed that all staff deserve some form of feedback, a notion different from that implied by "accountability." Another superintendent also evidenced strong feelings on the issue of annual evaluations rather than, for example, evaluations once every three years.

> People argued that [annual evaluations] were an onerous task ... We said, "No way. People deserve to get feedback every year. If it wasn't good enough for us that students get a report card every three years, why should it be good enough for the teacher or the custodian."

The ideal model. Described by one person as the ideal model in terms of its congruence with the organizational structure, the policy has not changed in form since 1985. There has been no review or update to the present time. And, given the management philosophy, according to one associate:

> We have not as a district set a requirement for format or for content—it could even be a checklist. We don't interfere with the process people use as long as they achieve results.

Expected outcomes are defined in the accompanying glossary to the policy as a "specific statement of what is to be achieved" as a result of "planned goal-directed action." There is a commonly voiced belief that the purpose of evaluation is one of staff growth and development that will "maintain and improve the educational service provided to the students of the district." And, as one superintendent stated, the 1985 policy gave teeth to that purpose.

Each employee reports to only one supervisor, who is then responsible for the evaluation of that person. At the school level the principal decides what the reporting relationships will be for all staff. In a large school a teacher would typically report to a department head or assistant principal. Associate superintendents are given the responsibility to supervise principals; more senior superintendents supervise associate superintendents. "This was part of our superintendent's way of organizing this district," noted one veteran.

Teachers are provided with information about their performance, assisted with personal goal setting, and with targeting areas for growth by their supervisor. A written document must be presented to the evaluee, but it is not viewed by central office staff unless the teacher agrees to this, or in the principal's judgment the teacher is experiencing difficulty.

Implementing the policy at the district level. The policy is being implemented by senior administrative staff in as diverse a manner as must exist in the district's schools, despite assurances from a respondent that "objectives for principals' evaluation are set together [by associates] and I'm assuming that [the principals] are doing that in turn with the teachers." This same superintendent also admitted that the actual process in central office was rather informal:

> There has been an exchange of information a little bit as to "how do you do yours?" and "how do you do yours?" type of thing. [There are] seven of us associates. We do [principals' evaluations] somewhat different. And from time to time, we compare notes and say "how are you doing yours this year and what did you learn?" ... We haven't "arrived" because I don't know where "arrived" is.

Monitoring the Teacher Evaluation Policy

Associate superintendents (from here on referred to as associates) monitor teacher evaluation practices by asking their principals for lists of names and explanations for those not receiving evaluations in any given school year. "We are monitoring with respect to numbers ... So we know evaluations are taking place, at least they tell us they are taking place." Success is measured by the makeup of these lists, because associates do not normally read the evaluations, although some would like to. One associate termed this monitoring " a kind of steering" but assumed that "the finishing touches, making it personal, those things would happen in the schools." Another referred back to the district management philosophy: "We don't interfere with the process so long as people achieve the results ... The results are that each individual gets one written evaluation a year."

One associate admitted to doing more monitoring lately because:

> Quite candidly ... it's not being done for all employees and sometimes there are glitches ... When you're dealing with 195 schools and 4,000 people you're going to find all kinds of things happening. Generally it's working well ... My trust in my principals is there and we remind them. They know what the policy is ... Every so often we hear little horror stories ... I would like to be a little more proactive in that but haven't figured out how to do that yet.

Another associate worried that the policy may not be implemented as he believed the district intended:

> My one funny feeling at the back of my neck says maybe you should get out there and look a little more closely. I hope I'm wrong but I don't think I am ... When we get into termination, like a couple we have had, it appears there has been a breakdown in the communication process.

Several associates mentioned the trust they have in their principals; all expect close adherence to the policy and are prepared to become directive to ensure that staff receive one evaluation a year.

Monitoring the teacher at risk. One of the issues regarding teachers at risk was found to be a matter of definition. Both definitions of the term and operating procedures were perceived differently. For example, one associate stated, "What is a teacher at risk? There is no special provision." Another in a description of the evaluation process stated:

> There is an evaluation process; it begins here and ends here. Maybe one in 10,000 will end in termination but that's not because it is a different process. The process for both those [kinds of] people should be the same.

One associate strongly believed that dealing with these individuals requires an absolutely different process. "The policy was not designed in any way to lead toward termination or reprimand." In fact the district has developed a manual of procedures for working with a teacher who experiences difficulty. These procedures give guidance to the principal to ensure that due process is followed should the teacher not respond to the assistance that is provided and termination be the final course of action to be taken.

While concurring in the "incredible amount of help that is available for these people [teachers with problems]," a central office associate declared that information collected by consultants and others "could be used in summative evaluation at any time," whereas two associates felt that these services are "aside from the evaluation process—for trust" and, "It's a separate matter and should be kept separate."

Another related issue was the assistance provided by associates to principals working with teachers in difficulty. Three associates said that they encourage their principals to share concerns of this kind with them. One, however, emphasized that they did not expect to be consulted because "my principals know where to get help ... I would expect to be alerted but I wouldn't want all the details—that's not my business."

Issues and Concerns

Respondents appeared to agree with respect to certain aspects of the evaluation policy and practices: the policy itself is generally deemed to be right in terms of intent and direction, the one-supervisor structure is working, and the focus on results needs to be maintained. Several topics were, however, raised by the respondents themselves as concerns about evaluation practices that need to be addressed. One that continues to cause "confusion in the district" is that of teacher personnel files.

Quality documentation. Referring to the decision not to place evaluation reports in personnel files, an initiator of the 1985 policy admitted: "at the time we were getting started up, we were not prepared to take that step ... it might have been more difficult to have the policy implemented and so we left it at the school level." Two central office associates strongly advocate placing employees' appraisals in their personnel files. One is concerned about the process of gathering information in cases of grievance or other difficulties. "It sure makes our job tough down here if we have nothing to back up [the action]." While he acknowledged that there would be problems related to storing so much paper in a central location, he believed that something must be done to account for the fact that no one knows where the hard copies of evaluations are or if indeed principals keep them. He admitted that the business community is "surprised" about the district's handling of performance appraisals.

The second central office associate told of negative teacher attitudes about written evaluation reports, including that "for years and years, we have been trying to dispel the myth that there are secret files." And although he has kept every appraisal he has done, he is concerned about what principals are doing with their files: "What happens, for example, when a principal leaves a school, that is, he moves to another school? Does he take them with him? What happens when a principal retires? Does she take them with her?" He believed that it would be relatively simple to change this practice:

> We can obviously cause [the placement of reports in files] to happen by just encouraging principals to send their copy. It is not a matter that we need to change the world in order to cause it to happen, because it can happen now.

Another associate sees the need to determine what the purposes of a personnel file are. She contended that while the evaluation normally remains the property of the teacher, "the policy does not specify that it is a private exchange of information. That's a practice and it's been developed culturally." In fact, she reads a number of the written reports because she is interested and because "the principal and teacher agree." "The bottom line is that it's private between the two of you unless the recipient decides to make it public." She has also been involved during disciplinary actions, and then a separate practice is initiated, which, according to her, has its own set of procedures and an accompanying manual.

Training for evaluators. One associate was concerned that while some training had been offered "back in the early 1980s when inservices were offered, little had been done in the intervening years, and consulting services would not ordinarily train people to do that." Believing evaluation to be a skill, he admitted that "we kind of assumed and let things grow ... We have not done a good job of training people." This associate insisted that everyone knows the policy intent, but he is not convinced that practice is in accord with policy. "I personally have not gotten out in the schools and said: 'How is it working with you?' and 'How many people are actually following the policy the way it was intended?'"

Another associate felt that the teacher effectiveness movement that had generated considerable attention in the district in the early 1980s had contributed to the comfort level of participating principals. "It gave principals a reason for being in classrooms and it gave them something to do when they went in there ... So when the evaluation policy came along, they already knew what they could be doing once they went into the classroom." This official believed that teachers who have had this training will also be more comfortable because "they both know then what the principal is looking for because they both had been to the training sessions." The concept implied here is that of common language and techniques that result in a shared understanding of the process used.

A third associate did not demonstrate much concern about the lack of assistance given to principals regarding evaluations:

> If principals had felt a strong need for assistance in performance appraisals, then that kind of inservice would have been offered. I don't recall if it was or wasn't at the time [in 1985]. I don't believe we are offering anything. I think we are all fairly confident with the process that works.

Other issues. One associate admitted to "running out of time and energy trying to keep up with this pace of evaluation." A second told of spending a full month each year writing reports for her principals, "from early in the morning to late at night. It's a difficult task ... Performance evaluation can be devastating for people and it can also be totally of no consequence." This associate also spoke of the need to "revitalize the concept" of evaluation in the district; she felt that the procedures needed "revisiting." She saw benefits in bringing principals together to "talk about what is difficult to do, to share their processes and out of that to come up with a 1992 version of results to be achieved." These kinds of communication linkages occur only informally in the district at this time.

Discussion

The district philosophy paper contains statements of purpose and commitment:

> The purpose of the [Poplar Plains] School [System] is to offer programs that foster excellence in learning and provide each student an opportunity for successful attainment of the objectives established by Alberta Education in "Goals of Schooling."
>
> The board of trustees, being accountable to the public and responsible for the results achieved in the district, will be guided by the goals of educations stated by Alberta Education.
>
> The district is committed to fulfillment of its purpose through appropriate use of available resources.

The district evaluation policy reflects this results-based philosophical orientation, as do all district policies. The district has consistently adhered to this "management purpose" over a decade. And ceding control to schools in the form of resources as this system has done represents a major shift in the structure of most school jurisdictions.

The potential of an evaluation policy embedded within such a decentralized school system is unlimited. For confident, creative administrators who have a good grasp of human nature and growth and development issues as well as evaluation skills, the permission to create an evaluation model that positively affects school ethos must be empowering. Teachers in this type of culture could lose their traditional anxieties about evaluation and come to see it as an opportunity for growth. Students would be truly served. If principals are, in turn, supported, encouraged, and guided by area superintendents with a shared understanding of the policy intent, then their work will be sustained by and imbued with district values.

The Riverside Report

Our intent in this section of the report is to describe and assess the process of teacher evaluation used at Riverside School, an elementary school operated by the Poplar Plains Public Schools. But we are interested in more than simply what happens and to what effect. We want to learn also *why* the teacher evaluation procedures have the effects they have, and to learn how these procedures relate to other features of the school, especially staff relationships, school leadership, and organizational culture. With this latter intent in mind, we open our report with descriptions of the school and community, using the words of the teachers and administrators who staff the school.

The Context

Riverside School is located in a park-like setting along a ravine in the suburbs of Poplar Plains. Principal James Watson, who is in his second year as the principal of Riverside, described the community in this way: "It is a wonderful community in which to grow up ... It is a very, very supportive community for the school ... We conference twice yearly with children and their parents. Everybody comes, which tells you something of the nature of the community."

"Although the community is highly supportive of the school," Mr. Watson continued, "there is not the kind of pressure on the school that one finds in the more wealthy suburban communities, in the sense of accountability for performance as measured by marks."

The School District

The commitment of the Poplar Plains Public Schools to school-based management is viewed positively by Principal Watson. He sees this management strategy as being supportive of the approach to teacher evaluation he has implemented; an approach that emphasizes professional development. The district sets priorities each year that are translated into priorities for the school by the staff in consultation with the community. Staff members are asked to consider these school priorities when they set their personal priorities for professional growth during the school year.

The district office is supportive of Mr. Watson's approach to teacher evaluation. At the time of district-wide implementation of mandatory teacher evaluation, each school developed a plan for teacher evaluation for approval by the district office. Mr. Watson can recall no formal monitoring since that time except for the requirement that a report be submitted each year of staff members who did not go through a formal evaluation process in the past year. Principals are not asked to produce the formal written reports. "There's a lot of trust there." The assistant superintendent, who is responsible for the yearly evaluation of the 25 to 30 principals who report to her, uses an evaluation process very similar to that used by Mr. Watson with his teachers. "She provides a positive model," Principal Watson observed.

The School

Approximately 500 students attend Riverside School and the school administrators and teachers report few discipline problems in the school. The parents are caring. A teacher who came to the school from another district several years ago described the student body in this way: "There's not a lot of trendy clothes or styles. They are almost the kinds of kids you would see in a small town." A more experienced teacher described the students in a similar way:

> They come from a very wide variety of backgrounds in terms of nationality, in terms of homes, parentage, all those things. I think that because of the atmosphere in the school, we generally have a very happy group of children ... The kids are very happy, they are very relaxed. And I think this school is a place where they feel good.

The kindergarten to grade 6 program offered by Riverside School is organized by year rather than the traditional grade level organization. Principal Watson, a veteran school administrator with experience in the district office and several other principalships before coming to his present assignment two years ago, described the school program at Riverside in this way:

> We work with the children where they are, as they are. We have a wide range of children, in terms of their achievement, at each year level. We make no attempt to narrow the range of ability and achievement in the assignment of children to classes at their year level. Teachers generally support this strategy although everyone worries about their ability to cope with the wide range of ability they find in each classroom.

About 10% of the students at Riverside School are "funded," that is, they have been given a special designation and funding because of their special needs. Twelve to 15 of these students are in the Academic Challenge Program.[1] All funded students are assigned to regular classrooms. Principal Watson commented on the school's integration policy in this way: "The nice part of that is that the majority of them [funded students] do not know they are children with special needs."

When asked to describe Riverside School in terms which would help in characterizing its unique features, the curriculum coordinator[2] Jean Mitchelson emphasized the ways the school nurtures the leadership abilities of its students:

> So many students are involved in providing services to other students. We have our family time. We train the leaders for whatever theme they are going to be working on. They meet in family time groups throughout the school. There is a mix of children from all grades in each group. The teachers help to monitor. We have peer conflict management teams. We have cooperative learning groups. There are cooperative activities on the playground. We have a group that provides help in the office. We have a group that provides help in the learning resource center. We are strong, strong believers in giving the older children the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to develop the sense of family throughout the whole school. We have house leagues for the older children. It's important in a big school; the sense of family, the sense of working together as a team. Teaching the older ones to look out for the younger ones. I have never seen fewer discipline problems, despite the great ethnic diversity. We have very level-headed children who seem to feel very good about themselves. It's not a transient community. The children stay in the school. But there are a lot of single-parent families.

The curriculum coordinator, when asked to comment on staff relations in the school, commented as follows:

> I have never been on a staff this large that gets along this well. We share. We don't keep things to ourselves. [As an administrator] there's never a feeling that you can't sit with anyone [in the staff room] and talk with anyone. It's a staff that is very tolerant of individual differences. There's respect for everyone's strengths and acceptance of the weaknesses that we all have. If someone brings [a concern] to my attention, I treat that as a positive. That's something we should be reflecting on. I have never gone to [the principal] and not been able to state my feelings. He is always there to listen. It's the kind of school where I go home and I always feel good. That's kinda neat.

In addition to the 20 teachers with regular classroom assignments, Riverside School has a support staff that includes the curriculum coordinator (who performs the duties of an assistant principal), 1.6 resource teachers, a librarian and a library assistant, and a half-time counselor.[3] Principal Watson commented on the availability of support staff in this way: "There's a good deal of professional support that's available but to make use of that support requires extra work."

An experienced teacher, who is viewed by her colleagues on the Riverside staff as a master teacher, described the collegial nature of staff relationships in this way:

> We are an open school. Teachers here are willing to share with one another. If they have found something that works successfully or not. It is not where you shut your door and [exclude others from what you are doing]; you know, people are very sharing here.

Another teacher described relationships among the staff in similar terms:

> The school is very professional. The teachers are never satisfied with yesterday. They always want to improve today. The staff cheer for each other. The principal is very concerned about each person. He appreciates their efforts. It's a very hard-working school. Above average.

A number of factors contribute to the openness and mutual support that staff members experience. A major factor is the nature of the leadership offered by the school administrators, and we have more to say about this later. Another contributor is the physical structure of the school. The openness of the structural arrangements enhances the frequency and quality of the incidental interaction between staff members during the school day. Here are one teacher's comments on the effect of structural openness in the school:

> My room is part of a network of rooms. In other words, there are three rooms adjoining into this "bubble." And if a teacher is ever going to come into this room, they come through the kindergarten room, because we tend to be in motion. And the children have never questioned why [anyone] is going through ... Because of those adults coming in and out, I don't feel threatened.

Another teacher with three years experience as a teacher at Riverside School described the school in this way:

> This school is near the front of pack with regard to providing the latest in [educational] opportunities ... With regard to our teaching, the teachers we have here are very flexible in their outlook and are quite prepared to incorporate essentially whatever it takes in order to get the students moving along and having positive experiences ... [We have] very dedicated teachers trying to do the very best that they can, sometimes to the detriment of ourselves.

Jean Mitchelson, the curriculum coordinator, observed that "You never hear a voice raised in this school ... Children feel very good about their learning."

The general outline of a picture of Riverside School begins to emerge: a strongly student-centered school staffed by a highly professional staff that works well together, encouraging each other to become even more fully professional. The school is well supported by its parent community; their children enjoy school and respond positively to the efforts of their teachers. A strong culture of learning has been established in Riverside School. In this context, teacher evaluation procedures have been implemented that have a strong professional development orientation. We turn now to a consideration of these procedures, beginning with a discussion of how they were decided upon and implemented.

Teacher Evaluation Policies and Procedures

We asked Mr. Watson what his image of the really outstanding teacher was. Without hesitation, he replied as follows:

> Purposeful; somebody who has a clear picture in his or her mind of what he or she is setting out to accomplish. Somebody who can see the big picture and then step back and work out the specific goals for how to begin to get there ... Organization is part of this; to be able to tie everything together. Part of the ability of the outstanding teacher is to be able to manage the incredible amount of detail efficiently.

It is not surprising, then, to learn that for many years Principal Watson has based his approach to teacher evaluation on goal setting procedures.

When James Watson began his new assignment at Riverside School, he met periodically in the summer months with the curriculum coordinator, who had begun teaching at the school the previous year, to discuss policies and procedures for the upcoming school year. Jean Mitchelson, the curriculum coordinator, recalled their discussions of teacher evaluation as follows:

> We both felt strongly that it should be a process that teachers saw as being useful to them. We all have areas to grow in. We're never really there. If they could pick the areas they wanted to grow in, there would be more buy-in. It would have greater purpose for them.

The previous principal had used scheduled classroom observations, checklists and observation guides, and extensive written feedback on classroom performance, but Principal Watson was disinclined to persist with this approach. Both the principal and the curriculum coordinator were familiar with approaches to teacher evaluation based on goal setting. The principal had used these goal setting procedures in three other schools before coming to Riverside. At the time of first implementation some years ago, the principal reported "We worked through this as a staff."

This time, however, once the principal and curriculum coordinator were agreed on the direction they should take, the principal simply proposed the procedures at a staff meeting. "In all honesty, it was not a very negotiated process," Principal Watson said. "We simply presented the proposal to staff and questions were encouraged about how it would work." The curriculum coordinator recalled the process in similar terms. "We shared the proposal at a staff meeting and outlined what it would consist of," she said. "I don't recall that there was a lot of reaction one way or the other, simply because of the newness of the process."

The Evaluation Procedures

The teacher evaluation process at Riverside School is initiated in early autumn when a memorandum is sent out by the principal and curriculum coordinator to members of the teaching staff. Included with the memorandum are forms to be used by teachers in preparing for "one-on-ones" with the school administrators, which take place in mid- to late-October. The procedure for the evaluation process is as follows:

1. Each teacher is asked in early October to set at least one personal goal and two professional goals they intend to pursue as a priority for development during the school year.
2. A series of three one-on-ones involving the teacher and either the principal or the curriculum coordinator sustain the goal setting process. These take place in late October, February-March (an informal follow-up), and May (formal wrap-up of the process).
3. In preparing for the May meeting, the teachers write a self assessment, a "sort of reflective journal" as the principal calls it, in which they report how well they have done in meeting their goals.
4. The principal or curriculum coordinator then writes a final report to each teacher, which brings the process to a conclusion for that year.
5. The principal notes, "There's no requirement in the process that you'll be sitting in the back, observing them teach."
6. A formal report is submitted to the associate superintendent each year noting the names of staff members who did not go through a formal evaluation process in the past year, and the reasons for this.
7. Principals are not asked to place the written reports on file with the associate superintendent. ("There's a lot of trust there," the principal observed.) Teachers may elect to place their evaluations in their central file with Personnel.

Revisions to the Evaluation Procedures

The goal setting approach to teacher evaluation is a flexible process that may not take precisely the same form next year or the year after. Within the goal setting framework, in Principal Watson's view, one could build in a student monitoring process, for example. Each teacher could be asked to identify one or more students to track over the course of the year. But since the introduction of mandatory teacher evaluation, Principal Watson has followed the same basic goal setting strategy in his approach to teacher evaluation. He is always fine-tuning the process, however.

In his second year at Riverside School, Principal Watson, in consultation with his curriculum coordinator, modified the procedures based on the experience of the first year. In the first year the agenda of the first one-on-one had five items: the long-range curriculum plans of the teacher for the school year, the teacher's personal and professional goals for the year, career planning, methods of communicating with parents, and examples drawn from portfolios of student work. "There was too much," the curriculum coordinator observed. "There wasn't that proper chance to just relax with the staff members. This year we narrowed it down to just the long-range plans, the goal setting, and what they were looking toward in the future. That worked well in the hour."

Reasons for Use of These Procedures

Dating back to the first implementation of mandatory teacher evaluation, the principal's views have been consistent: "Teachers are professionals. What is in it [mandatory teacher evaluation] for the teacher and the school? It was pretty evident that, from a provincial perspective, the big factor was public accountability. But I was interested in the school level; how would this help the school?"

Furthermore, Mr. Watson was concerned about the effects of teacher evaluation on the teachers. He noted, "Teachers are afraid of evaluation. There's a sense of risk associated with evaluation when somebody else is making judgments about whether what you are doing is acceptable ... Teachers appreciate the basic assumption of competence rather than incompetence. They appreciate being treated as professionals. It changes the tone of the relationship."

The curriculum coordinator, who is evaluated both as a teacher and as a school administrator, confirmed the receptivity of teachers to a goal setting approach to evaluation:

> Teachers can buy into this ... It's a safe vehicle because teachers are providing their own indicators by which success is assessed. You feel secure when you know what is expected of you. There are no surprises; you can monitor your own progress. You can have total control over the outcome.

In addition to placing control over the teacher evaluation process in the hands of the teacher, goal setting also assigns responsibility to the teacher for his or her professional development. Principal James Watson commented on the significance of taking responsibility for professional development in this way:

> I like the process because essentially it says to each teacher we're responsible for our own professional development. I'm not responsible for the teacher's success. The teacher is. I'll take responsibility for contributing something to that success, but if they don't want success, I can't make them.

Ongoing Issues in the Goal Setting Approach to Teacher Evaluation

Several issues can be identified in the implementation of goal setting procedures for teacher evaluation.

Difficulties encountered in setting goals. "Some people found it difficult ... still do ... to set those goals," the principal commented. "We're still not experts in the goal setting process and I still feel uncomfortable many times." The principal and the curriculum coordinator try to help staff members step up or step down their goals if they seem to be aiming too low or too high.

Ensuring accountability. The most common difficulty in goal setting is not in the teacher's ability to identify worthwhile goals, but rather in specifying the indicators by which it can be discerned to what degree the goal is being achieved. The curriculum coordinator commented on this issue as follows:

> When the teachers present their goals to you [in the one-on-one] the first step is to listen to them, where they are coming from and what they have in mind ... Then I say to them: to help me out [in writing up my report on the one-on-one] how will I know that you have achieved your goal? They may know what they are after. I wanted to make sure that our communication was clear so there's no surprises at the end. I wanted to get accountability from them—I'm talking about the ones who were a little looser in their orientation. All their ideas were good but some needed a little direction in terms of what I might see. How might I see it in what the children are doing? What written information will you gather? How will you share it with me? Are you going to keep records?

The underachieving teacher. The principal commented on the issue of teachers who are too easy on themselves. He cited an example of a teacher he worked with some years ago:

> This is an individual who loves to teach but doesn't work too hard at it. He's a charmer. He has a very positive presence. He's enthusiastic. His verbal skills carry him a long way ... His performance fluctuates so much. It makes him a difficult person to deal with. When you look at his overall performance, this is someone the kids love and the parents love. But as a teacher he could be more than he is. The issue is this: if you confront the teacher in too heavy-handed a way, you may risk losing more than you gain.

The teacher who "plays the game." A fourth problem area, according to the principal and the curriculum coordinator, is the teacher who "goes through the motions" but "hasn't really bought into the process" required for rigorous implementation of goal setting processes. This problem is closely related to the problem of ensuring accountability as described above but has an additional element as revealed in the following comments of the principal:

> We have in mind a teacher who is well liked by the students and their parents. When we meet for the initial one-on-one, he seems to be enthusiastic about his plans for the year. But he doesn't faithfully follow through on what he promises to do. When we asked repeatedly for the evidence that he has addressed the goals he set for himself, nothing is forthcoming to show what progress he made. It's not that we expect that everybody is going to achieve what they set out for themselves. But they should be able to show us something that gives us a starting point for further discussion about what might be tried if the teacher has fallen short.
>
> In the case we have in mind, it's definitely not a situation where we'd feel that a growth model is inapplicable and a deficit model should be substituted, with all that implies for evaluation. This is a person who has strong verbal and interpersonal skills, and good communication skills. But in effect he disengages himself from the process. There's an integrity issue here. The question we have to ask ourselves is this: Can you force engagement in the kind of evaluation process we have set up here? Or must we admit that the process requires integrity and commitment on the part of each teacher and that if these are missing the process just doesn't work?
>
> Perhaps we have to revise the process for such a teacher *by setting goals for them.* In effect we would be saying, "We want to see thus-and-so happen. Would you build a goal into your plans that addresses this concern?"

Teachers who demand too much of themselves. The curriculum coordinator cited an example of a problem that recurs more frequently at Riverside School than the problem of the underachieving teacher or the teacher who opts to "play the game":

> My response was: excellent goals! outstanding! But you've given yourself an awful lot to have to be accountable for to me. So I urged her to scale back her goals. She did this but during the year she came back to say that she had taken on too much and we looked at it again. We stayed within the framework of three goals. But we substituted one goal for another.

Demands on the resources of the school administrators. The principal is only "partially satisfied" with what he has been able to accomplish to date through teacher evaluation. "Part of the reason has to do with my own level of skill," he said. "I don't know enough ... both in terms of the goal areas the teachers are addressing and also in terms of process skills—conferencing skills, analytical skills, problem solving skills. I depend very heavily on the expertise of this staff. I feel guilty about how dependent I am."

The Teacher in Difficulty
A different process entirely from that described above is used with teachers in difficulty. "The assumption shifts from competence to incompetence," the principal explained. He uses a "well laid-out process," established at the district level, once it is clear that the assumption of competence is no longer tenable with a given teacher. It can easily take a year to work through the process. Crucial to this process is to get on the record "a set of written deficiencies."

Principal Watson began this process last year with a teacher, but because the teacher went on long-term disability the process was not completed. "I spent a lot of time making clear what was expected of him in specific terms. This gave us something to hold the teacher to," he said.

Implementation of the Goal Setting Approach to Teacher Evaluation

Implementation of the goal setting procedures for teacher evaluation is examined in this section from two perspectives: first, from the perspective of the school administrators; then from the members of the teaching staff.

School Administrators' Perspective
The principal and the curriculum coordinator consult extensively with teachers in informal ways to help them set their goals. Thus the first one-on-one session (which starts in mid-October) is part of a process rather than a single event for which teachers prepare.

In this consulting process, the principal has increasingly urged teachers to address school goals, that is, to address the question "What are we trying to work at as a school?" "A List of Proposed Results for 1991-1992" was prepared during the budgeting process the spring before. He encourages, but does not require, the Riverside teachers to select a goal that reflects one or more of the school priorities for the year.

A form is available for teachers to use in preparing for the October one-on-one meeting, but they are not required to use the form. The principal's view was this: "We don't require a lot of writing but some of [the teachers] do."

Most teachers are realistic in their goal setting. Sometimes, the principal notes, a teacher may propose a "trivial goal"; for example, a goal that she or he may already have achieved. When this happens, the principal may point out in a friendly way that the teacher already does this very well. Or he may follow up with questions to see if there is more here than he had originally thought.

An informal meeting with each teacher in the February-March period, usually over lunch, is used to review progress toward the goals.

The last meeting, held in May, is more formal. This is based on the teacher's written self-assessment. The principal noted: "Supply teachers are brought in. There is more of an accountability factor in this meeting. But we also try to make it a celebration of the year's work, even if the teachers did not achieve everything they set out to achieve."

In general, the written self-assessments last year were "very thoughtful," in the words of the principal.

The process ends with a written report to each teacher from the principal or the curriculum coordinator.

The principal noted: "There is no requirement in the process that you'll be sitting in the back, watching them teach." Nevertheless, because of the way teaching is organized in the school, "it would be very unlikely that anybody in this building would get very far away from what you would expect to see happening." The curriculum coordinator commented on classroom visitation as part of the teacher evaluation process in this way:

> It depends on the goals the teachers have set for themselves. Their plans may call for me to come in to observe something they are doing. I come in only on this basis to maintain the trust that we have built up.

Teachers' Perspective
The teachers interviewed gave uniformly positive assessments of the evaluation process used at Riverside School.

Support for risk taking. The evaluation process is supportive of risk taking. In the words of one of the school's most highly respected teachers,

> Maybe in a particular year, I set myself a goal and perhaps I didn't attain it, but I would want to be able to figure out why I didn't attain it. And the principals I've had, I'd feel they were supportive.

Focus and commitment. This same teacher went on to say,

> Having to write it as a goal and share that, say it openly, you are committing yourself to it. So there is a bigger commitment. And over the year, I took pictures of the children working in cooperative learning. I had samples of their work that I presented to the administrator. So I think it made me focus. And it made me make sure that I did keep that goal in mind.

Another teacher had similar comments:

> The biggest influence [of a goal setting approach to teacher evaluation] is that it causes you to focus on one or two areas that you feel you could either improve or expand on

> or change. And in doing that you are also forced to look back to what you did before because that is where you make your decision from ... So it's a focusing thing. It does cause you to focus. And because it is not left alone, because we don't just look at it now and it is all over, and we do come back to it again, that causes us to follow through.

Ideas for improvement of teaching performance. Where do the ideas for improvement come from? Again we note the remarks of a highly regarded teacher:

> We are an open school. Teachers here are willing to share with one another. If they have found something that works successfully or not. It is not where you shut your door—you know, people are very sharing here.

Another highly regarded, senior teacher on the staff commented on this point in this way:

> I think the biggest influence in that regard is the people you're working with ... So I know that a lot of changes I've made over the years, I've made teaming with other teachers. And we sort of pool our ideas and come up with new ideas or throw out old ones and start over.

The principal's approach to supervision. The principal has established a comfortable atmosphere for the evaluation process.

> He drops in now and again, all the time. I really appreciate that kind of evaluation. Previously I've had the situation where the principal comes and sits in the room for half a day or part of half a day. And I did not like that form. I find that creates a lot of tension ... He just pops in and he'll sit down for a while and he'll visit or he'll take part in what we're doing ... And I think he gets a really good picture of what's going on in the classroom. And it creates no tension.

Initiating the goal setting process. Two teachers' comments outline the goal setting process:

> Early in the year the principal meets with us. And it is a very pleasant occasion. Because it is a time to chat about your students, about your plans. It is not a high pressure kind of thing at all. It is a nice hour.

> It was like an invitation to come in and talk. And I thought that was wonderful. I had never had that experience of just sitting down for a half hour, or whatever it might be, and just saying what you like about the school, what you would like to see changed, what do you like about your assignment, where do you feel you want to head, what are your career plans. I just found that such a personal thing that I hadn't been used to.

Initial reservations about goal setting. This same teacher continued:

> I remember thinking, "This is my goal. I don't know why I have to have all these reasons, ways of getting there, and why I have to prove that I've gotten there." To me that is my own thing. I thought why do I have to prove all this? Why do I have to take pictures to prove, or why do I have to send over [writing] samples? ... But as the year went on, I enjoyed doing that. I enjoyed taking the pictures. I enjoyed seeing that, yes, I was reaching those goals. And it was kind of neat to have that evidence for myself ... So at the beginning my back was up a little. Not about having to have goals. I think that is wonderful. But about the format we had to go through. It was all because it was a change. A change is hard until you get used to it.

Transfer to students. One indicator of the degree to which goal setting has influenced Riverside School is the use of goal setting procedures by teachers with their students. One teacher described what she has done in this way:

> My students are writing their own goals. I remember at one time thinking I don't know if this will work. I mean they are only nine years old. But it is amazing—it works ... They have four goals for at home. Things like a hobby I would like to learn. Pretty light types of things. Then four goals for at school. And then what is really neat is we did it near the beginning of the year. And then just before interviews, they went through them again and checked off what they had achieved—goals they feel they had reached—and they added a new one. And I think that is when it becomes effective, when they see, "Oh yeah, I'm doing that now." And that is the same with us I think too. Once you [see], "Yeah, I worked toward that goal and I feel better about it," then there is an incentive to get a new goal or to extend that goal further. I really think it is good.

Effect on the staff. "[What we do in evaluation] is worthwhile because I think it brings teachers and administration closer together" commented one teacher veteran.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the curriculum coordinator:

> We are a large staff. There has to be some way of keeping communication open. Our approach to teacher evaluation provides an excellent chance to communicate and a chance to share what is happening in our rooms. If we were to do away with that it might become much, much harder to keep in touch with all our staff ... Sitting down with staff and letting them share their directions, their goals, their ambitions is crucial. I'd feel very badly if we didn't have some way of keeping that contact, that door open to the staff. It would be too easy to overlook someone, not intentionally. It makes sure that everyone has the opportunity to share.

Teacher Evaluation and Instructional Improvement

Mr. Watson commented as follows on the relation between teacher evaluation and instructional improvement at Riverside School:

> Staff development is right at the heart of the school. In that sense, there's not very much about the school that is more important than evaluation. But if we were to do teacher evaluation in a traditional way, it would be just an administrative exercise ... We're here to develop; the very essence of being a teacher is to enhance one's abilities ... We're trying to create a situation here where we work in an atmosphere of support and reinforcement—and pressure, but not from one person, a supervisor, but general,

> collegial pressure that comes from a sense that all of us have of wanting to do well.

The curriculum coordinator discussed the relation between teacher evaluation and instructional improvement in very similar terms:

> It encourages us to reflect and to realize that there's nothing wrong with having something to work on, and sharing that with someone is helpful. As many years as I have taught there's still something I need to work on. It is a safe and purposeful process—the teacher has chosen the areas they want to develop ... It forces one to reflect; it forces one to keep your eyes open to look for new experiences, new directions, to keep yourself aware of what is happening in education.

The ethos of Riverside School encourages improvement in what is done in classrooms. The principal said, "It starts from an expectation that we can all grow ... Deficit-based approaches are not going to be very successful. Most of the teachers I know, irrespective of the quality of the job they are doing, are teachers by choice. They care about children and they're there to help make the world a better place and they tend to work rather hard. To start with an assumption that's deficit-based is to be off on the wrong track."

The principal and curriculum coordinator encourage collegial consultations in setting goals and for assistance in monitoring progress toward goals. They are convinced that the evaluation process they use contributes more to the building of this improvement ethos than would traditional evaluation processes.

The Northwood Report

Teacher evaluation in the junior high school selected for this case study is a positive model of teacher growth and professional development. A strong culture supports learning of both students and adults and calls for responsiveness to students, teamwork, a positive school ethos, and a common understanding and practice of effective teaching. In what follows, we discuss (a) the policy, practice, and policy development process of teacher evaluation in Northwood Junior High School, and (b) the linkages between teacher evaluation and professional development. As the practice of teacher evaluation is embedded in the daily workings and culture of the school, the context must also be explored to better understand how the policy and practice came to be, and how it sustains itself.

The Context

Northwood is a school of approximately 600 students and 35 staff. It is situated in a middle-class neighborhood. A range of socioeconomic backgrounds is represented in the student population. A high percentage of the students commute to school from surrounding neighborhoods, travelling by yellow school bus or city transit. The administration and staff work hard to create a sense of community among the geographically and racially diverse group of students. The staff spoke highly of the students: "great kids!" "I think they are a real good bunch of kids we have here," and "I know that all the usual problems are out there [for students], but they don't materialize [here in the school]." The students are generally considered to be cohesive: strong peer support groups and an active students' union.

The staff range in experience from first-year teachers to 20-year-plus veterans. The majority of staff are in their 30s. They are seasoned, energetic, enthusiastic, and caring. The principal is perceived as being responsible for attracting younger, positive, and active new teachers to the staff and for helping to build a team. The teachers expressed a sense of collegiality with one another and a high degree of respect for the expertise shown. Comments such as: "It's a very good staff. I feel very supported by other teachers," "Excellent relationships among staff" were commonly heard during the interviews.

Northwood is a junior high school with a reputation for being a very positive place to learn and work. Students and teachers alike comment without prompting about the importance placed on being positive, working with one's strengths, and caring for, nurturing, and supporting one another. They consciously choose not to dwell on negative incidents, and they work hard at creating a positive atmosphere in the school.

One staff member, discussing how a colleague new to the school found the school atmosphere a change from the previous school he had worked in, said:

> He cannot accept himself what he was before, because the atmosphere here won't allow it. Teachers are so busy talking about the good things that are happening. Before, he came from an atmosphere where the negative things were brought up ... It was kind of a reactive thing. Here it is more of a proactive type of thing. And he is trying to forge ahead and catch up with that. It is definitely an atmosphere thing.

The positive atmosphere was seen as strongly valued and modeled by administration:

> Our administration is very positive, they don't tell you that you are wrong, they try to turn it into a self-discovery kind of thing. This is what I observed: [they would ask] what were you trying to accomplish here? By talking about it you can try to see a different point of view. You say, oh, I could have changed this, or I could have changed that. It doesn't come down to a right or wrong. That makes me feel very secure.

Other staff members described the school as "supportive," "very professional," "caring and sharing," "progressive," "vibrant," and "open." The staff see themselves as a team, working together on behalf of students: "the kids know that teachers and administration have similar expectations, we use the same techniques often"; "most of the teachers discipline through relationships rather than through authority," "there is a lot of cooperative planning." The atmosphere of the school was described as "collegial," particularly in reference to the implementation of curricular changes:

> It [the collegial atmosphere in the school] makes it possible, because by oneself, one is so limited in ideas, and the physical amount of work that has to go into a complete curriculum change, as well as the change in teaching methodology that goes with it, requires team effort. You can't do it by yourself.
>
> We work a lot as a team. You want to be the best you can, you want to be up on things. We are a progressive school.

The school principal, a person well respected by staff, emphasized the need for teamwork among the staff, and with students and parents. It was very important to her that teachers work together, and that they see the students and parents as part of the team.

> We work together as a team. Not just with staff but with students and parents. We have parent-student-teacher conferences not just parent-teacher conferences ... We involve students in everything we do. Students solve their own problems. The conference is with the student and their parent, not about the student. The student is a very important part of that conference because they are the ones that have to make the changes ... We built up the team feeling first with staff, and then with students and parents.
>
> We share the load here, we try to make it as fair as possible. It's part of the way we operate. It's not unusual for people to offer to help each other ... You get a little bit of success in working together and you build on that. You grow together and work on things together. The more you can get people working together the more effective you become.
>
> Some of the departments in the school plan together, not only for budget purposes but even down to lesson planning. They get together and share ideas for lesson planning.

The principal expressed her concern about meeting the needs of individual students, about being student-centered, and about caring for students.

> We are a very caring school, we care about everybody ... We try to meet the needs of every individual as best we can. We stress achievement, we want to do things for kids, and we want them to be successful. We have some unique programs in trying to meet these needs—the thinking skills program, the integration of curriculum.

The school was not always like this; it took the principal a few years to build the kind of school that she described. She was appointed as principal seven years ago. The staff were anxious to be provided with good leadership, but they were not a cohesive group at that time.

> At first you meet resistance, you don't just come in and this happens all at once. You have to build it. At first I met resistance with a number of ideas, and you have to bite the bullet and accept that you are going to get some resistance, but if you are convinced that you can bolster up the weak spots here and there, help those places where there are a few cracks in the seams, eventually they buy in totally. Our thinking skills program was that. It met with some resistance, but you have to provide reasons. You have to let people know that this is what you want to see happening because you believe in it and you give your reasons why you believe, and in the long run, how students and staff will benefit ... There's resistance from some because at first it may mean more work to be added to an already heavy schedule.

The principal was a significant force in the success of this school and in the success of the teacher evaluation process. Her persistence, modeling, positive orientation, ability to motivate others, to be perceived as a strong staff supporter and strong leader all contributed to a school climate and culture that promoted student and teacher growth.

The School District

The district policy on teacher evaluation provided a framework for the school policy and sufficient latitude for the principal and staff to develop a school policy that fitted their needs. The district policy stated that "the performance of each staff member will be evaluated by the immediate supervisor to maintain and improve the educational service provided to the students of the district." Evaluation was to be based on the achievement of expected outcomes and conducted at least once a year. The purposes of evaluation were to enhance performance of staff members, to "indicate the extent to which expected outcomes have been achieved," and to "provide information for making decisions." Immediate supervisors (principals, in the case of schools) were to develop, in consultation with staff, procedures for the evaluation process consistent with the district policy. Although this policy provided some restrictions or guidelines, it was generally perceived to be sufficiently open that each school could develop a local policy that met the staff's preferences for evaluation.

The relationship between the principal and the area associate superintendent was such that considerable freedom was given to the school to develop a school policy without interference. The area associate superintendent was perceived by the principal as having great confidence in the school:

> Things have gone very well here so we have not had to have much involvement [by the associate]. We have a great deal of independence in doing as we see fit. No one gets involved in it ... If your achievement results are good, if parents are not complaining, if your survey results are good, if the associate walks through your school and talks

> with staff and students and everything looks happy and going well, if there are no signs of difficulty we are really allowed to do as we need to ... I feel comfortable that we have support.

The associate superintendent's evaluation process of the principal was based on indicators and results. He would discuss the overall operation of the school with the principal, gather data from a variety of sources, and write a report about the results attained. The district conducted annual surveys of parents, students, and staff that provided detailed information about the satisfaction levels of these groups. District-wide student achievement assessments provided information about academic performance. The associate would also deal with parent complaints and inquiries. This evaluation process was not growth or goal oriented in that the principal was not asked to establish goals for herself at the beginning of the year, but district goals were set each year by the school board, and the school would establish its budget priorities based on these goals. In that sense the principal's own evaluation was an evaluation of the school, and the expected growth was linked to the goals of the school system.

Teacher Evaluation at Northwood

The current school policy has been in place for about seven years and was initiated by the principal in her first year at the school. The staff developed the original policy during a professional development day. Each year the principal asks the staff if there are any changes that they would like to see, but so far the policy has remained intact. The principal described the development of the policy:

> When I arrived here seven years ago there was no teacher evaluation process in place ... The staff was very positive about getting some new leadership ... They wanted a change.
>
> The teacher evaluation policy we developed as a staff, and it was right at the time that [the school district] had brought in this concept of teacher evaluation, so there was some guidance. This was a year before they had made it a requirement, but I saw the direction that things were going. I quite agreed with them, to have an outcomes based approach, and having indicators so that you could tell whether you were achieving your [outcomes]. It seemed like a super way to go. I didn't want to be going into classrooms and telling people on a scale of one to 10 where they fit, that didn't accomplish anything, it didn't make sense to me. I wanted it to be growth oriented, a professional growth kind of thing ... So we set about as a staff looking at that.
>
> You might say that I navigated the way that we developed it but it was essentially a staff thing. We talked about it as a group. I had indicated to them that this is a direction that the school board is going, that everybody will be evaluated, so what we wanted was something that everybody could be comfortable with ... And so I approached them with this idea, setting objectives, it being a professional growth model, and they were quite receptive to it.

The principal believed that her role was to persuade and convince staff that the approach being advocated was going to work. She spoke of modeling behaviors for the staff that she expected them to adopt.

> My assistant and I did an awful lot of modeling that first year. We developed policies that were consistent with our modus operandi. And we had to discuss why this policy was going to be effective, why it would work. You have to do a sell job in terms of policies. You have to reach consensus. It's steering the ship but getting ownership from the people who are involved. It's got to be convincing, it's got to work.

Over the last seven years the policy has not changed. The procedures have been refined, such as the setting of goals (or outcomes, as they are also known), but not the model. The principal commented:

> We've developed these [outcome statements] through the years. Our initial ones were much more primitive and we were learning. It was a matter then of teaching teachers what an outcome is, what is acceptable. It didn't take them long. At the same time the district was also getting us to set our school priorities in that fashion, so we as school administrators needed to learn how to set priorities and outcomes for our schools. So it was very consistent, which was very beautiful. It would involve the staff in setting school outcomes, and then what they were setting for themselves was a very similar sort of thing. The staff member's outcomes very often reflect school priorities, but [they] needn't.

The Policy

The teacher evaluation policy and procedures that were developed at Northwood Junior High School have two parallel components: goal setting and classroom observation. The goal setting process is quite clearly a professional development activity, while the classroom observation process is a more traditional instructional supervision activity. According to the principal, when the policy was being developed at the school there was an expectation from staff that classroom observation be maintained as a component of the evaluation process.

> It was ... an expectation by teachers, that their performance in the classroom be observed. I sensed that. It was verbalized in that way. I got the reading from the group that that's what they saw as teacher performance evaluation, as opposed to this [the goal setting process] because this was a new concept. Because that expectation was out there, and I quite like that, we developed this almost as a two-prong focus.

Goal setting. Early in the school year teachers establish several goals for themselves, in consultation with the principal. These goals, or statements of outcomes, are categorized into four types: teacher, learner, program, and organizational or administrative. Each teacher is asked to set at least three goals, and some set as many as nine or 10. For example, one teacher had three goals for this year: (a) I will help develop Language Arts and Social Studies integration materials and plans at the grade 7 level; (b) I will standardize certain portions of the grade 7 L.A. and S.S. curriculum for all eight classes; and (c) I will professionally develop my awareness of L.A. and S.S. integration. Another teacher chose as one of his goals to "increase [his] utilization of cooperative learning." A third teacher planned to make greater use of the library as a learning resource in his language arts classes. Although it is considered desirable to have goals in different categories, it is not mandatory.

The form where the goals are recorded also requires the teacher to describe the strategies that will be used "to get there," and indicators that will tell how well the goal has been met. At the end of the year the teacher records the results achieved, factors that may have affected these outcomes, and recommendations for the future.

The principal described the process in this way:

> We call it a teacher performance evaluation report; we should change it to staff performance evaluation report because we do use it for all of our staff ... We set our outcomes at the beginning of the year in a one-on-one. [The teachers] give this to me prior to our one-on-one so that I can take a look at it and see what they have set as outcomes. All of them are professionals and they do have goals that they set for themselves. What this does is it clarifies their goals, it focuses them more, and it gives me a chance to act as an instructional leader in this process.
>
> We started with one outcome the first year, after that I've been requiring at least three, sometimes I'll get four, five, even as high as nine.
>
> There are different types of outcomes, but I don't set any requirements because everyone has different needs; it depends on what their assignment is, if they are new to something.
>
> My experience is that teachers know where their weaknesses are if they have any ... From last year, if I'm observing a class or something has focused as a bit of a weakness, I might suggest to them that might be a good area for you to put something down in your outcomes for next year, and so it will appear there. If it doesn't I might do some encouraging but I rarely have to. Right now after these many years into it we have a trust relationship that's been built up. I don't often have to put anything in there ... But if anyone were in difficulty, that's where it would focus.

There was agreement among the teachers interviewed that goal setting was primarily each teacher's responsibility:

> From my experience, the administrators will accept whatever goals we're setting and will work only to help us clarify the goals and make it clear to them.

There are several critical elements to the goal setting process: the onus placed on the teacher to determine the areas to be improved, and the broad range of goals that were possible. It is the teachers who have prime responsibility for their own development and/or the improvement of their performance. The principal only intervenes in setting the goals if a teacher is perceived to be ignoring a critical weakness that has been observed. Teachers are expected to take charge of their own learning needs. The four types of goals create a broad field for the teacher to reflect on their learning needs, from instructional strategies, to student performance, to curricular concerns, to organizational dimensions. It is common for evaluation procedures to focus almost solely on instructional variables. The goal setting process facilitated a broader focus. A teacher could now focus on students and the relationships between teaching and learning, as well as teaching.

There was a high level of agreement between the teachers' and the principal's views about the policy. The following comments from one teacher illustrate the clarity of understanding of the policy:

> We start with a sheet where we write three or more objectives: what do I want to achieve? They are things that we either see for ourselves, our weaknesses, areas where we want to improve, I want to do more of this, or I am weak in this area; therefore, I want to improve on it. The second column is strategies; how do I get there? In that area you list the ways you are going to try to improve on or change whatever it is you've listed as an outcome. It might be in-services, it might be getting yourself better organized, it might be interacting more with the students. The indicators, the third column is where you try to decide how you are going to determine how you will know you have achieved what you set out to achieve. This ends up being a very positive thing; the teacher chooses what they want to improve. If the teacher is a very professional person who wants to improve, and [the principal] is very careful about her selection of teachers, I think that is one thing she does well, if the teacher is professional they are going to know the areas they need to improve in. This sheet allows us to think about that sort of thing, and figure out how we are going to do it, and how we are going to know when we have achieved whatever it is we set out as a goal.
>
> We then take this sheet to our supervisor who is either the principal or the vice-principal, and he or she will go over it with us; they may make suggestions, as to other strategies we could use or other indicators. We try to make the indicators as quantitative as possible, because then we have facts and figures on it. There are things that are more qualitative, such as improving your relationships with students. That's hard to measure quantitatively. Then there is supervisor's comments; they usually give you something positive like "looks good," "keep at it," or something like that, then there's a place where we can comment if we want to, and then that's signed, and filed away for a while, but the teacher gets a copy.

Classroom observation. The second component to the policy is the classroom observation process, or supervision of instruction. Each teacher is visited by the principal or vice-principal formally for the purpose of this process at least once a year, with a preobservation and post-observation conference. Drop-in visits occur throughout the year. The principal described this process:

> We also look at the process itself, and that involves the supervision of instruction in the classroom. That's how I bring in the supervision of instruction into the evaluation. That arose, at least in part, because that gives me an opportunity to become a little more involved as the instructional leader, to be in the classroom and we can talk about process. It gives me an opportunity to share professional expertise with staff and to provide some guidance, and to learn from them at the same time because a lot of them are pretty good ... It may or may not relate to the outcomes. Before I go into the classroom they fill out a preobservation information sheet. It, too, is very growth oriented.

The teachers interviewed, who for the most part had not been in the school when the school policy was being developed, did accept the classroom observation process as a necessary component of evaluation, but it was not always a highlight. The process had overtones of a summative evaluation, although it was engaged in to provide assistance to teachers to encourage professional growth in technical areas. One teacher said this of the process:

> A classroom visitation is scheduled where the principal or vp come out. We prepare a proper lesson for them, [and] they come [to] observe it, usually from beginning to end. They may look for certain things, they may ask what do you want me to look for, do you want me to look for set, for closure, for the elements of the lesson, for student interactions, or for proactive discipline, or something along those lines. You can emphasize one of your strategies in the classroom visitation. I think it's a good idea, classroom visitation, because if I can't get one good lesson together in a year ... It's very important because I should know the proper parts of a lesson, and I should be able to take a proper lesson from the set to the closure, and do a really good formal lesson.
>
> I also think it's really, really important to pop into the classroom. Just because I can put together one good lesson a year it doesn't mean I can teach, that I get along well with the students. I could bribe the students for that one class with just about anything. Or I could have a really bad lesson. Maybe I'm the kind of teacher that reacts negatively to stress, having the administrator in the classroom.
>
> I really like the process [overall]. I don't like the formal classroom observation, because I feel I know what I am teaching, I'm teaching for the kids, not the administrator. When it's a formal classroom observation you always feel that you should change it. With some people this may be the only imaginative lesson in the entire year. It's fake, false. You may do your set in one class, your actual work in the next, and your closure in the next. If the administrator is coming into this class then I have to change everything because I have to have a set, and a closure, so the kids are suffering, because you have to make an impression so that you can keep your job.
>
> As much as I hate the in-class formal observation, you need it. You need to know that the teacher knows the technical aspects of teaching. For good teachers, it keeps you on your toes. I feel good when they pop in ... And then I can give myself a pat on the back, or they can give me a pat on the back.
>
> If teachers think that no one is watching them then they can get pretty slack. Oh, gee I'm tired this year, I think I'm going to take a ride on my laurels.

Another teacher remarked how nervous she was the first year she was teaching and the principal came into the room, not an uncommon feeling for first-year teachers. The students in the class reacted by being exceptionally quiet and well behaved that lesson. The teacher seemed almost disappointed that she was not able to demonstrate her ability to control the students. There is perceived to be a somewhat artificial air to the classroom observation process, but as it is conducted in a positive manner the objections to it are mild.

The classroom observation process is a somewhat structured activity. Broad lists of criteria for teacher performance have been provided by the principal over the years and further framed by an inservice program on effective teaching skills that the principal had been promoting. Most of the teachers on staff had been through this district-sponsored inservice. A common language and understanding about instructional processes had been developed in the school as a result.

> There were in-school professional development programs operating after school. They were totally optional ... They were after school and went late. At least half to two thirds of the staff attended ... But it was developmental. It put us all on the same wavelength. And it made it possible for us to increase our levels of communication.

Many of the teachers spoke about the elements of a good lesson, such things as anticipatory set, closure, and transitions, a language and instructional format that had been popularized by Madeline Hunter. One teacher observed:

> Before she [the principal] comes in to observe us, we fill in a lesson plan. We also choose from a list of items what we want her to concentrate on. So, yes, she probably looks at our student or teacher outcomes, and even our program outcomes [from the goal setting process], but more so she is looking at what we ask her to look at in our lesson plan. Okay, so it might be looking at our [anticipatory] set, or our questioning techniques, pacing, those kinds of things.

Parallel or asymmetrical? One thing that was not clear was how the classroom observation process fitted with the goal setting process. These two activities were operated under the formal structure of the teacher performance evaluation policy, and could both be described as professional growth oriented, but they could also be described as conceptually quite distinct processes. One (goal setting) promotes a concept of teachers as professionals, directing their own learning agenda, making judgments about the nature of teaching and learning and the needs of the students, collecting their own data and reflecting on the results. One teacher described the process in this way:

> I think that the evaluation process [the goal setting] here gives people a real sense of professionalism. It is very much enabling, and it is also reinforcing personally and professionally. Because it very much puts our own development in our own hands. What better definition of a professional, I think, than someone who will, given the opportunity, grow and develop on their own? And it doesn't need a lot of supervision.

The other (classroom observation) suggests that teaching is seen as a technical activity; the teacher follows an instructional format, and the supervisor is required to monitor the effectiveness of the application of specific skills and to offer assistance to teachers who are not technically proficient. To the credit of the principal, the way process is conducted does not appear to be mechanistic. The staff are generally comfortable with classroom observation, perhaps because the principal and assistant principal are so positive in their relationships with them. One comment from a teacher illustrates this well:

> We feel at ease with classroom observation, we are not pressured to always be 110% on everything ... Our assistant principal from last year would come into our classroom and continually say things like "thanks for letting me be here," or "I really enjoy being in your class, I'm really glad you let me have this opportunity," all those little phrases that maybe take five seconds to say but it sure presents a different atmosphere. I credit the administration for continually doing that.

But there is some discomfort, as witnessed by the teacher who felt that her lesson for the observation period was not as natural as it should have been for the students' sake. What appears to be happening is that the technical aspects of teaching are not overtly prescribed; there is no visible template, no checklist of specific teaching behaviors. But they have become instead a part of the invisible culture: "There is a normative culture in this school in terms of our beliefs, our philosophies, that exists whether we evaluate teachers or not" (the principal). Teachers have knowledge of and an acceptance of a set of technical skills in instruction. These skills provide a basis for determining what is considered minimally acceptable practice. There is an understanding among some of the teachers that the principal or assistant principal wishes to observe a range of these skills in use in the classroom when they are conducting an observation session.

The two processes, goal setting and classroom observation, become somewhat problematic in reconciling the assumptions being made about teaching in this school. On the one hand teaching is viewed as a professional activity, the teacher as being responsible for directing his or her own learning needs. On the other, teaching is a technical activity and teachers are responsible for being able to demonstrate their technical prowess. According to the staff who were interviewed, the practice of evaluation in this school is working, despite what might seem as some conceptual inconsistencies.

Teacher Evaluation: The Principal's Perspective

Teacher evaluation was seen by the principal as a positive experience because it was formative and growth-oriented. The process provided the principal with an opportunity to "recognize the good things that people are doing." She described her role as one of assisting teachers, "encouraging them and being positive about the things [goals] that they are choosing," and "to develop teachers to become the best they can be and to help them along their own professional careers."

The principal believed that teacher evaluation served several purposes for her: (a) it was a vehicle for accountability; (b) it was a tool for communication, allowing the staff and administration an opportunity to express what is valued, to develop a school culture; (c) it communicated that technical skills are important; (d) it provided an opportunity for her to demonstrate instructional leadership skills; (e) it permitted her to give assistance in a confidential manner to teachers who were experiencing difficulty; and (f) it enabled her to help teachers to set goals for the next year.

The principal's general educational philosophy was a belief in growth and learning for all:

> My own personal philosophy in education is that if you are not moving forward you're moving backward. You have to keep growing. If the staff didn't like that approach they would leave. My experience is that virtually everyone here feels that way. It reflects in things they say and their approaches to things. It's an expectation, the way we live.

An accompanying belief held by the principal that is instrumental to maintaining positive relations with staff and ensuring them that support and trust exist is that she believed teachers to be "forthright, honest, and realistic in their self-assessments." She believed in teachers, that they were capable of learning and generally were self-motivated.

The principal also believed that teachers should have basic skills in classroom instruction. She actively supported the district Teaching Effectiveness program and had encouraged all staff to participate. This appeared to create a "normative culture" of teaching behaviors that became a given, a baseline for teacher growth. The principal's formal, twice-a-year visits to the classroom provided her with some assurance that each teacher was capable of performing at a level acceptable to her.

Underlying the goal setting process and classroom observations, the principal brought into play information that she absorbed day-to-day about each teacher. In a natural way, data about teacher performance presented itself to the principal from a variety of sources and on a continuous basis:

> Any good administrator ought to be assessing everywhere they go, and everything they see, and hear. You get those indicators everywhere you go. When your student test results come in you are getting an indicator; you know how many kids are coming to your door for discipline purposes; you know when you walk down the corridors; you know when you walk into classrooms what's happening and the atmosphere that is present; you know what kind of communication is taking place in the staff room; you know when you meet teachers what is happening, you see how they feel, you see their emotions, what way they are responding to kids, interacting with kids and with each other, and you know what their interests are, you get to know them as people, and what motivates them. So there are so many things that you see all around you. You hear about their interactions with parents; you hear from parents; all of these things make up the climate within which you operate, you have to be really sensitive to all of this. If you are sensitive to all of this you are taking a reading. And if you are reading it, what you do is [write] it down on paper. That assists. I think it's a very important factor to promote growth.

The information that the principal collected would be brought forward when she assisted a teacher to select goals at the beginning of the year, if something had been noticed that she believed needed attention. Sometimes these data provided her with evidence that a teacher needed help immediately, and she would respond to that need. On other occasions the data might suggest that a teacher was at risk, that is, the teacher had significant problems that needed more intensive assistance.

This informal collection of natural data was a significant contributor to the principal's perception of a teacher's performance. It provided a perspective that only time and multiple experiences could give. It helped to provide a balance for the occasional inconsistencies that humans are capable of. Multiple observations help to create patterns, and it is the pattern that reflects performance much more accurately than single incidents.

Teachers in Difficulty

The principal believed that teachers who were having difficulty needed a different process than what the evaluation procedures provided.

> Teachers at risk? It can start off with this process, because our whole objective in dealing with teachers is one of growth ... You could work off of this process if the teacher keeps growing, then you have no problem. But if there is no improvement, despite all that you do, then the problem is serious. You move more quickly; you don't wait until year end.
>
> There are degrees of being effective in a classroom ... It depends on how youngsters are being affected. It could be many things [such as] good classroom management skills not being in place ... Most of the time it has to do with many areas not being in place ... with classroom management, instructional strategies, not being able to meet individual needs, not being able to assess student needs, not being able to adapt curriculum to student needs, the whole gamut.

The teacher evaluation policy was not seen as the vehicle to address teachers in difficulty, although the process may help to identify such situations. This belief was confirmed by one of the teachers interviewed:

> People in that kind of position [teachers in severe difficulty] are trying to fight day-to-day to make the decision of whether it was the right career for them. How are they going to survive? They are making very, very different decisions. They are not dealing with professional development. On the other hand, I have worked with teachers who are not strong in the classroom, but are willing. And I've seen real growth. I have never seen a teacher given up on ... So there are two areas: the teachers who are truly in difficulty—I don't think the policy has an effect on them.

Teacher Evaluation: The Teacher's Perspective

The nine teachers interviewed for this study were in almost complete agreement that the policy and practice of teacher evaluation in this school was excellent, that it was professional development oriented, and that teachers accepted the need to be accountable. A few comments from the teachers illustrate these notions:

> If I was in another school, I think I would continue to adopt this process.
> It gives you a sense of accomplishment.
> The staff have a sense that they are continually developing themselves.
> We work a lot as a team. You want to be the best that you can, you want to be up on things. We are a progressive school, a progressive district.
> [There is] a very clear, well articulated procedure.
> Evaluation is working just fine here.
> The teacher evaluation process makes teachers accountable ... [and] helps to keep you focussed.

It was important to some teachers that the practice did not appear to be judgmental; they were not ranked or rated. Evaluation was not a statement about one's worth, even in terms of the level of one's instructional performance. What this practice did encourage was risk taking; it was all right to attempt things that you might not achieve. Teachers were encouraged to stretch themselves.

> Our administration is very positive; they don't tell you that you're wrong; they try to turn it into a self-discovery kind of thing. This is what I observed, what were you trying to accomplish here. By talking about it you can try to see a different point of view. You say, oh, I could have changed this, or I could have changed that, it doesn't come down to a right or wrong; that makes me feel very secure; I don't like the term evaluation. That automatically means, what kind of number is going to be attached to me, where do I stand compared to everybody else? We stay away from that.

> I think that generally speaking it [teacher evaluation in this school] is not considered supervisory in any way, or judgmental. But it is taken more like "what do you want to achieve this year? And how do you want to grow professionally this year?" ... I think it works because it's more of a professional growth than "how good of a job are you doing or how bad of a job are you doing?"

> There is not that much stigma if you don't achieve it either, because you've got this [category] that says "factors affecting outcomes." You can justify. "I wasn't very successful with this one. I ran out of time. I was swamped this year. I just tried to survive." Whatever it was. It takes it out of that realm of fitting you into a slot and giving you a grade, a number.

The criteria for evaluation are individualized within the goal setting procedure. This brought greater relevance to the teachers in terms of what they perceived as being important to them.

> It [evaluation procedures at the previous school] was one that had a number of categories and a checklist. And one of the things that I am very confident of is my ability in the classroom. That is the area where I have developed expertise ... That old system I found extremely offensive, because it forced somebody to focus on things that perhaps didn't matter any more. It focused them on little criteria, that perhaps when I was working in a cooperative learning model, just didn't fit. And so it forced awkwardness.

Teacher evaluation forced teachers, willingly, to step back from the dailyness of teaching, to become more reflective, and to keep in touch with the professional world of teaching.

> Sometimes you can get so caught up in the classroom stuff and being here that going and speaking to your peers and going to inservices isn't foremost on your mind at all. So that helps give me a perspective that I have to [get] out [of the classroom]. It helps me maintain a program of professional improvement.

For some teachers the classroom visits and drop-ins were important, as they provided the teacher with assurance that everything was going well, or the visits provided an opportunity for an exchange about the lesson being prescribed. The experience that teachers had with these visits and follow-ups had been positive.

> [There] is never enough. I would like to feel that the principal or assistant principal feels comfortable enough with me as a person that they can come into my classroom at any time ... [The administrators] are so swamped that they are not able to do this ... [Teachers will drop in] but there's not enough time in the day for casual visitations, however.

> I am an open-door [kind of] teacher and if [the principal] wishes to speak to me, she comes in and stands in my room ... or [the assistant principal] does, if he wants to see a student. I feel that this is a method of keeping in touch ... On occasion, I will invite the head coordinator into my class throughout the year because we had done an integrated unit on the novel which was geography-based. Often teachers will exchange ideas and invite others into their classes. It is very open.

The practice of goal setting was perceived as a positive aspect of the teacher evaluation policy. It provided a focus for teachers, it allowed teachers to choose what they perceived as their learning needs, it empowered them with a sense of professionalism, and it gave them an opportunity to be accountable on their own terms.

> When I came here I saw the program being a very formative program that was allowing me to set developmental goals ... My growth has been three times as fast here as it was before, because I am now clearly allowed to set my path in the direction I want to. And so my strengths have been increased tremendously by that. The relief in not seeing a checklist was astounding. And the ability to set goals and to work within those goals is a real freeing thing that allows me to really pursue professional development.

For some teachers, goal setting helped them focus first on the results they wanted to achieve, and then to develop plans that would help them achieve those results. As they monitored themselves over the year they could see what they were accomplishing. One of the teachers had just made a transition from a classroom teaching position to become the school librarian, and she used the goal setting process to develop a year plan.

> This year I changed quite a bit from my usual [practice]. Usually I put down three or four outcomes a year, and strategies and indicators and so on. This year I put down 14! ... Because I used it as my year plan. I sort of killed two birds with one stone. After I had been in the library for about a month, then I sat down and said, "What do I want to achieve by the end of June? Where are we headed in the library?" And so on. And then I started writing down my year plan and I realized I was actually writing down my outcomes for the year. And I wanted to go over them with the administration anyway—to know that what I had planned fit into everything else here in the school. So I used my plan as my evaluation outcomes.

> When you have to write down specifically what do I plan to do this year, it does give you a focus. And then when you have to put down, how will I know when I've got there? And you have to come up with numbers or dates or products, something concrete, it really forces you to again narrow things down so you can focus. And I find that very beneficial. Because of my own particular learning

> and teaching style, I find it beneficial to be as concrete as I can about those things.
>
> The goal setting gives you a focus for the year ... something to focus on and sit back over the year a couple of times and say, "Am I doing this? Have I implemented this? How is this going? Let's reevaluate." It gives you something to remind you of what you had set out to do ... Teachers are busy people and you get going in a million directions ... [It] allows you at the end of the year to sit back and do some evaluation and reevaluation. I think teachers do this anyway, whether it's after a week, or a lesson, or a project.
>
> I think it [teacher evaluation] has improved my performance too. Because once I've written it down and I know where I'm headed, then you do find yourself working at them.

The policy and practice of teacher evaluation was perceived as one means for receiving acknowledgment for the effort that teachers put into their jobs, and for their accomplishments.

> It is quite nice at the end of the year ... to get recognition that it [effort to achieve the goals] deserves because if you've worked hard on something, it is nice to get recognized for it.
>
> I find the administration here very encouraging and supportive ... [When] someone says to you, "You're doing a great job and we're very happy with what you are doing. Your children are learning, and your test scores are good." that positive feedback allows you to face the uncertainty when you doubt that you are doing a good job.

The Process of Change and Learning

The practice of teacher evaluation in Northwood Junior High was generally considered by the principal and teachers to be a professional development activity, so much so that evaluation was not considered a separate process, or even evaluation at times:

> When you approached us to do this performance evaluation survey thing, we had to stop and think, "Now, what really is our process?" because it's just the way we do things. We don't think of it that much as performance evaluation. (the principal)

The principal spoke of the evaluation of staff as an opportunity to recognize accomplishments, to be positive, and to facilitate growth. In her own words:

> Teacher evaluation is a very positive process for me because I don't have to go in and do summative evaluations. They are all formative and growth oriented. I have so much opportunity to give positives, to recognize the good things that people are doing. It's an opportunity for staff to set their own goals. I'm not telling them, just encouraging them and being positive about the things that they are choosing to do. Assisting them so it becomes kind of exciting ... It's a very positive kind of experience.

When the principal was asked about teacher evaluation as a priority, her response illustrated how integral the practice was in her mind to professional development:

> As a priority? That's hard to answer. It's such a part of everything we do. Everything we do is growth oriented, that's the way we think about everything ... This is the enjoyable part of my job, I can go into classrooms, I don't have to answer telephones and deal with discipline. I can just sit and observe a classroom, or I can have a great collegial interaction with somebody without dealing with problems ... Problems are not ignored, [however].

Teacher evaluation was regarded as a formative process, and directly tied to other professional development activities:

> Directly linked to that evaluation format is a firm commitment to professional development. The only time a teacher is ever turned down for a professional development opportunity is when the money runs out ... Professional development is closely tied to that. It has to be, because if we're setting our own goals, if we're pursuing all these new things, we have to be free to [attend professional development activities].
>
> The processes [evaluation and PD] are distinct but I don't think they are mutually exclusive ... Being positive is very much a philosophy of the school.

One teacher made a rather interesting comment about the linkage between evaluation and professional development:

> [There is an] expectation from the Principal that teachers are professional. I do the very best that I can in my classroom and I don't expect someone to be coming into my classroom telling me, well, you didn't do this or that. I would quit before I would be told what to do and how to do it ... I know that I am expected to be a good teacher. Part of being a good teacher is learning cooperative learning in this school ... The link is that I am accountable.

Professional development was an activity of choice, as the goal setting process was, and left teachers with a sense of control over how they taught, and yet they were still accountable for the decisions they made. Apart from the classroom observation component, the practice of teacher evaluation was perceived as growth oriented and very much an adult learning experience.

Bringing About Changes in Practice

One of the key issues in an analysis of teacher evaluation is to ask whether the practice makes a difference. In this school the practice is so embedded in a culture of learning and growth that it would be difficult to answer that question with any degree of certainty. But one way to approach this issue is to ask teachers why they change the way they teach, if indeed they do, and what kind of information do they use in deciding to make any changes. In other words, do teachers use information gathered or given to them as a result of teacher evaluation, or are there other sources of information, and motivation, that help to bring about changes in their teaching?

It would appear that many of the teachers in this school use information gathered directly and indirectly from students to help determine if their teaching practices or techniques are in need of any changes.

> [How do you use information from students, and what do you use?] I use marks, that's part of it. If I have students that are capable and they are not pulling through, then there's something wrong. Either they are not trying or I'm not teaching. I don't think I can give a black and white answer on that particular area ... I give an assignment and the students all do fantastic, well maybe it was too easy. If I give an assignment and nobody gets it, well maybe it was too hard. I try to judge from there. I also look at the attitude of the students coming in. Are they enthusiastic? Are they saying, "I want to be in class," or are they hesitating? ... There are things that I do that make them want to come through that door and want to learn. If they are not enthusiastic, then I have to take a look at why. What do I do with that information? I don't know if I can answer that. I don't change my style day to day.

The motivation to change, to learn new skills, or acquire new knowledge would appear to come from several sources, however: if the teacher thinks that a change will help his or her students learn better, if a new technique will make teaching easier for them, or they believe that they will be more successful, or just because they are not content to continue doing the things they have always done—they like change and new things. Sometimes a teacher will try something new just because it caught his or her attention at an inservice session, and it appeared to be worthwhile. The following comments made by several staff members illustrate a variety of reasons why teachers make changes:

> Why [do I change]? It makes things a whole lot easier for me ... The benefits are that it helps kids learn more easily, effectively, and in a more enjoyable way.

> [I'm] always changing a little bit ... Being able to observe other teachers teach helps ... [I] evaluate myself by observing others ... [I] learn from the way another teacher disciplines a student ... The environment you are in makes a difference.

> I'm not content easily ... I'm on this earth for a one-shot deal, I better make the most of it ... I love teaching.

> Teacher evaluation is not the principal factor in encouraging professional development. An unanticipated inservice program, for example, may be the greatest stimulus in a particular year.

> They [the goals] come from the evaluation of last term. I look at what happened last year, all my successes [and the] areas that are a little bit weaker. If I identify an area that is weaker then I can decide what's reasonable [to do], what is a higher priority. [This year I decided to work on classroom management.] I didn't feel comfortable with it. Nobody came to me and said, "You're not cutting it." I just felt that way.

The teachers collected ideas from many sources, but the source mentioned most often was other teachers. Teachers sought assistance in a variety of forms from other teachers. They learned from informal conversations with their colleagues, their department heads, and from teachers they knew in other schools or even districts. Other teachers were credible; their ideas could be understood and had the backing of experience.

When the principal was asked what brings about change in the classroom behavior of a teacher, she replied:

> I think they [the teachers] have to see that you are right about what you are suggesting. They have to be involved in coming up with a solution. A problem has to be identified, or an area of weakness, and they need to be involved in coming up with this solution. They also need to be convinced that it is the right way to go. They have to see that they too will benefit, that it will not put them in a difficult position. It can't be something that they are contrary to doing. They have to see that it will help them and the classroom and that it will make the whole situation better ... If you can get them to see that it will make life easier for them, they will want to change. It's pretty hard not to change if you believe that everything will be better, for you and for the situation.

> You have to know as an administrator how you are going to reach that person. It differs for every individual.

> [Teachers get their ideas] from observing other staff members, from themselves through discussion, from a consultant. It depends on the personality of the person and the nature of the problem.

The principal also suggested how she tried to influence the behavior of teachers in her school, particularly when she first arrived:

> First of all they had to know what I believed, I had to model it. Everything I wanted them to do I had to model it, whether it was my approach to youngsters [or something else]. I would bring the teacher in when I was dealing with a youngster, and I would model that behavior. I never raise my voice at a youngster. Their problem isn't that they are deaf and I had to clarify that with the teacher. It's one of being positive and I expect a certain change. I would have my arm around the youngster and not be angry with them.

Does the practice of teacher evaluation change what teachers do in the classroom? Maybe. Teachers are not quick to recognize or accord much effect to the practice of evaluation. But how does one discern the cumulative effect of the positive, supportive atmosphere generated in the school by the principal, the vice-principal, and other staff of the expectations that are communicated in so many different ways that teachers are learners and should constantly strive to improve, of the culture in the school that values new ideas, sharing, and teamwork, of the press for change that comes from so many different sources, including the experience of teacher evaluation? Does teacher evaluation make a difference? Perhaps not by itself, but in conjunction with many other conditions in the school that promote, and/or facilitate teachers to seek to change, surely it can make a difference.

The Westview Report

As was the case in the other two schools involved in the Poplar Plains case study, teacher evaluation practices at Westview were embedded in the context of the school. The report, therefore, begins with a description of that context. This is followed by a discussion of the actual teacher evaluation practices at Westview, including the history of the development of those practices. The major focus of the paper, however, is on the way the practices are experienced by teachers. Brief sections of the report deal with the extremes of teacher evaluation: a recent initiative to recognize excellence in teaching and perspectives on teachers experiencing difficulty.

The Context

Westview is a composite high school located in a mixed, but predominantly low socioeconomic status, community that the staff at the school often referred to as working class.

It is relatively small by urban high school standards, currently straining its physical capacity serving just over 1,000 students. The building is an older structure that has been well kept but is relatively plain in appearance. It could perhaps best be described as aesthetically neutral. The atmosphere inside is one of comfortable busyness. This has not always been so. Eight years ago, the school was in severe decline. With fewer than 700 students, the school had the reputation of being one of the tougher schools in the city. A long-time staff member recalled that at one time "there were areas in the school that women teachers were not safe walking." Since the present principal arrived eight years ago, there has been a steady improvement in the reputation of the school, and a commensurate increase in the size of the student body. The school is now perceived as having strong focuses on academics, athletics, and fine arts.

The school offers a full range of the four core high school courses (English, social studies, mathematics, and science). These are complemented by a reasonable range of optional courses (in second languages, physical education, computer education, fine arts, home economics, technical education, business education, and work experience). There is a unique offering at the grade 10 level in mathematics and English. Students may elect to register in Math 10S in lieu of Math 10 and/or English 10S in lieu of English 10. Students taking 10S courses receive extra instructional time and receive eight credits rather than the usual five for English 10 or Math 10. These courses are intended to help students who might otherwise find it difficult to successfully complete the 10-level courses. This is only one of the ways that the structure of the programs at Westview reflect what the principal described as a belief "in upstreaming." He had this to say:

> We're trying to get students just to reach a little bit higher than what might be expected in what I'll call a traditional high school setting. There's been a tremendous pressure in high schools over the years, as you probably know, to stream kids. Anytime you start streaming kids, it's almost [always] the downstream ... We took the opposite side and said, that's stupid, downstreaming kids. Why don't we upstream? And that's what we've done at Westview.

The principal noted that upstreaming is done at some risk to the reputation of the school: "If you put more students into an academic program, your average result is going to be lower." And average scores in the 10-level courses are made public. That Westview still chooses to upstream, says much about what the principal and staff see as important. The principal and the teachers we interviewed took pride in noting that they based all the decisions they made on what was best for their students.

The staff, a mix of experienced and recently graduated teachers, was described by the principal and assistant principals as "very strong." This was reflected in the principal's assertion that teachers should be involved in important decisions in the school, which he described figuratively as sitting on the "Board of Directors." He combined business and sports metaphors in making this point:

> I'd like to see more teachers sit on the Board of Directors. I'd like to see all of them on the Board of Directors, feeling that they have a very vital part to contribute to the total enterprise ... When you think of it, the teacher, I would argue, has the largest portion of shares in an educational institution. I mean they are the focal point, and if you went to the business model they obviously would have a larger portion of the shares because they are the "playing coaches."

When teachers spoke of colleagues, their comments echoed a sense of friendly, positive, and collegial relationships. They referred to openness on staff, frequent sharing of materials and ideas, and a perception of their colleagues as hard-working. This is how one teacher described the Westview staff:

> I thoroughly enjoy teaching here. When I first started, there was a noticeable division between the men and women staff. The men all sat together in the morning. The men all went skiing and none of the women were invited.

> There was a lunch gathering for women only. Coming here it was really alarming ... You're not supposed to sit here because it's so-and-so's seat. There has been a change over four years. It's become more integrated as more women join the staff ... The staff is really open. They are a lot of fun. There's a lot of enthusiasm. [You'll see] signs on the door—"Chemistry Help, Wednesday at Noon." That's the same with our department. Every Thursday we've got the computer room open. There's a really good camaraderie in the school. I don't hesitate going to the administration if I have a problem with a student. I get along really well with everybody on the staff ... [We have] high expectations for kids.

Staff comments about the principal suggest that most of the teachers held him in as high regard as he held them. These are two examples:

> He's a human being—number one ... He is really intrinsically interested in his teachers. He loves kids. He works hard. And when he does make a decision, I think it is felt by everybody that it is for the universal good of all.
>
> [The principal] is a unique individual. He loves to talk education. He loves to philosophize about education. He likes to be a leader. And I think that this school has done some really unique things in terms of really building a climate in a school. And I really like teaching here. I've learned a lot of things from him.

And the principal is indeed a unique individual. He can perhaps best be characterized as a leader who believes in and respects the potential of students and staff with whom he works, holds strong beliefs about what constitutes excellence in education, and is passionate about those beliefs. At times, these positions seemed to form a dialectic of sorts. This is illustrated in the way he thought through his frustration at the pace at which change occurs:

> I'm very disappointed in one way. And that is the amount of time it takes to change something. I feel very ineffective, very frustrated sometimes with how slow change is. And I guess I would like to see a more open approach to change. I mean, lots of times, I'm not saying all change is great, I don't believe that, I'd be the last guy to say that, I don't believe in change for the sake of change, but I would like to see more things tried with an open and honest form of assessment whereby if it was showing good merits and good points to keep it, and if it wasn't abandon it or revise it or whatever.

But then, with his next breath, he confirmed his orientation toward involving teachers in important decisions and honoring their expertise: "You have to trust people. You have to give them a sense of ownership." He felt that the results of processes that involved staff were most often "better than what I had originally envisioned." He introduced and supported processes that involved staff extensively in important decisions, even though he saw this as slowing the pace of change in the school. He seemed to be constantly working to reconcile this with his deeply and passionately held beliefs about education.

An appreciation of the school context as it is briefly described above is important to understanding the teacher evaluation processes in place at Westview. In many ways, the processes of teacher evaluation described below take meaning only through their interplay with the school context. To read about them without a sense of the school context in which they were implemented would be to risk misunderstanding them entirely.

Teacher Evaluation Practices at Westview

To understand teacher evaluation practices in any school it is important to know both the formal structures related to the practices, and the meaning that individuals have come to associate with the structures. This section of the report addresses both these dimensions. The two structural components of the teacher evaluation processes at Westview are (a) the annual evaluation provided for each staff member, and (b) an initiative to establish a process for identifying and recognizing excellent teachers.

The Annual Teacher Evaluation

The school district policy requires that every staff member in the school be evaluated each year. Within the school, the responsibility for teacher evaluations has recently been delegated to the department heads who, according to school policy, are expected to administer a student perception survey in one or more classes chosen by each teacher, then compile the results for the teacher. The results are intended to inform teachers of areas where students perceive them to be strong, and of areas in which students perceive them to be less strong. The principal described the process as being growth oriented and not serving any other purpose. In fact, he labeled evaluation systems designed for any purpose other than professional growth "a waste of time and a poor use of resources." Teachers shared the perception that the purposes of this process were exclusively related to professional growth. Sample questions from the instrument to collect the student data are included in Table 1.

The principal and other administrators at the school undergo a similar process of evaluation, with data collected through a Teacher Survey of Administrator Performance. There seemed to be two reasons for this. Foremost was the principal's strong belief in the usefulness of the data thus gathered. But his conviction that he would not ask teachers to do anything that he would not be willing to do himself was an important secondary factor.

Although the process described above was the only prescribed teacher evaluation activity at Westview, several of the department heads chose to include a component based on classroom observations. Impressions from the data thus gathered were shared with teachers at the same time as were the data from the student survey. One teacher, for example, reported that her department head "has then given written comments, observations, feedback, so it is not just the student perceptions." Written feedback beyond the summary of the student survey data, however, was not the norm. Another teacher described a more typical means of sharing evaluation data and conclusions: "We'd sit down and talk about what could be improved, what could be worked on, if there were things that he could help me with."

The structure of evaluation, therefore, differed somewhat from department to department. In the words of one teacher, "I'm not sure how much consensus there is here among department heads [with respect to evaluation]. I suspect not a lot."

The Development of Westview's Teacher Evaluation Policy

The principal linked the development of the approach to teacher evaluation that utilized the Student Perception of Teacher Performance instrument with school improvement efforts undertaken early in his tenure as principal. He described those events in the history of Westview as follows:

> One of the first things I did was to meet with the staff in large groups and small groups and ask them what direction they would like to see the school go in, what were some of the strengths of the current school, what were some of the weaknesses, and so on. And needless to say, when we met, and I guess I would say in small groups especially, we started looking at specific operational strategies that we could put in place that would make the school a better place to be for students. And that was our main concern. And to maybe highlight what I mean by a better place for students, we looked at specific things, not just general school climate, which is very broad and evasive and hard to measure and hard to get a handle on, but very specific things about their achievement. Were we happy with their achievement and what the students were doing? Did we feel we could do a better job in terms of getting the students to achieve at a higher level? I think there was unanimous consent from the staff at that point in time that that was one area we definitely felt we could do a lot of things on, was the student achievement area ... And like all educators for the last thousand years we said, "Well, the teacher is the key." The teacher-student relationship is the most important relationship in any educational institution. So we also said, "Well, all right, let's dwell on that topic too." And we discussed, looked at various ways of improving our performance as teachers, some of the things we specifically should do in classes, how to measure our performance such that we knew where we stood in terms of some benchmark or standard.

From this process, the earliest version of the student perception instrument emerged. The principal felt that it was a very useful instrument, made more useful each year by the process through which it has been revised. He described the latest process of review and revision:

> Just last year there were teachers at various staff meetings and other meetings, saying that some of the items on the old instrument were now inappropriate or should be revised or should be changed. So a committee was struck; there were four people. They got a little help from a professor at the University, trying to dig into the latest research again. Actually he looked over the instrument and gave a very positive recommendation. Only slight modifications were recommended by him. A couple of new items were suggested. And the committee then revised the form with his recommendations and a few of the staff recommendations on some items also were taken into consideration. And it went back to staff and was approved. So this year we're using the revised instrument. And it seems to be a little better. I think, you know, each year you will hopefully make something better.

And when reflecting on the current status of teacher evaluation at Westview, the principal noted:

> Now it's sort of a matter of fact at Westview that that's the key instrument that they use [for teacher evaluation]; an administrator can use it; the department head can use it; a teacher can use it. There are no hidden agendas. They're available to anyone who wants to use them at any time with any type of class.

Table 1
Sample Items From "Student Perception of Teacher Performance" Instrument

Your honest and fair evaluation of this teacher's performance on the following criteria would be most appreciated.	YES	NO	UNDECIDED
1. Time is provided regularly to discuss and/or take up problems with homework.	___	___	___
2. Assignments in this course are appropriate.	___	___	___
3. The teacher checks homework and assignments.	___	___	___
4. Assignments and exams are returned within a reasonable amount of time.	___	___	___
5. The teacher deals effectively with students who misbehave.	___	___	___
6. The teacher is consistently prepared for each class.	___	___	___
7. The teacher uses class time effectively.	___	___	___
8. The teacher presents material in an effective manner.	___	___	___

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Teachers' Experience of Evaluation

For the most part, teachers at Westview approved of the evaluation procedures they experienced. They recognized that evaluation was mandatory and felt that they had developed appropriate procedures for conducting the evaluations. But there were some reservations. One teacher, for example, said:

> There are a lot of positives about evaluation. Personally, I'm not scared about evaluation. Some teachers really are nervous. They raise "what if?" concerns: What if the principal is a real tyrant? What if the department head doesn't care? I've been here 12 years. I haven't had a principal out to get me yet. Even the most miserable group of kids [who] fight with me tooth and nail [through the year], at the end of the year, you get comments like "The teacher really cares."

Concerns of the nature expressed above seemed always to be one step removed from the person speaking. They were expressed as concerns that someone else might have, or concerns that may be problematic in other schools. That this was so may be another reflection of the high levels of trust between principal and teachers. Teachers were aware of potential abuses of evaluation, but trusted that these abuses would not be visited upon Westview.

One teacher said: "I believe I do a good job and I'm not concerned about my evaluation. Any evaluation I've had has been a good evaluation. It is not something that bothers me." Comments such as this suggest that the overall strength of the staff may also have contributed to their acceptance and even support of the teacher evaluation procedures at Westview.

Validity. Most of the teachers felt that the student perception instrument provided them with valid information about their teaching. These were typical first comments:

> The students are honest.
> Generally the students give you a pretty good idea.
> Students have a good idea of how a teacher is doing.
> The kids are scarily honest.
> If I'm not doing my job, the kids are going to tell me right away.
> Most students recognize a good teacher not in terms of whether they like the person, but when I'm finished at the end of the year, am I learning?
> The first year, I was a little nervous, but some of their criticisms, I thought, were very valid. They drew my attention to things I hadn't thought of.

Teachers seemed to feel that although a few students in a class might give inaccurate assessments, the feedback from the class as a whole would still be valid. One said it this way: "The odd time you get a kid that is bitter; if you get a whole class that's bitter, I'm sorry, something isn't right there. You're not dealing with the audience the right way." Even the possibility that a "difficult" class might result in a teacher receiving a poor evaluation was considered. One teacher noted, "You'd be surprised at how honest students are for the most part. One year you might run into a class where the assessments are unfair. But a teacher's evaluation wouldn't be based on just one of these." Another teacher pointed out that the possibility of having a difficult class as a data source for the evaluation was diminished because teachers were allowed to choose the classes to respond to the student perception instrument.

Several teachers also argued that the information they received through the student perception instrument was more valid than information they had received in other evaluation formats. One noted:

> Evaluation systems based on classroom observations may be misleading because a teacher may put on a performance; but you can't fool kids over a school term.

Another compared the evaluation system she had experienced in a school she had worked at previously with the one she experienced at Westview:

> Evaluation reports [in the other school] were meaningless. I don't know what they were based on. We'd get these glowing reports that came out of thin air ... Nobody even visited my classes to see me teach.

Again, the theme that the system at Westview was perceived by teachers to be better than other available alternatives arises.

Overall, then, teachers believed the process to be quite fair and to provide relatively valid information, which they took quite seriously. Some also noted that they welcomed the positive feedback they received through the process. For example, one said: "Some of the praise—I'll call them constructive things they had to say—made me feel good, because it was my first year at the high school."

However, teachers did have several concerns with respect to the validity of some of the data. For example, one teacher, referring to student responses to the item "The teacher offers assistance outside of class time." said "Now some students might say No to that. All I can say, three times a week, is 'Come and see me.' And if they don't, what can I do about it?" Similar concerns were voiced with respect to the item "Assignments and exams are returned within a reasonable amount of time":

> I have a stack of essays to read, I read them as quickly as I can. But what's reasonable for me may not be reasonable for them. They want them back in a week, and it could take me two weeks.

> One of the things that bugs teachers to no end is when a teacher is very conscientious in getting homework marked and back to the student, and yet on the form the student

> decides that he is going to put down that you don't get the stuff back to him on time.

However, these were concerns with respect to only a few items on the student survey. Even the teachers who expressed these concerns accepted that the data were generally valid.

Usefulness. These are just a few of the comments that teachers made about the usefulness of the evaluation process at Westview:

> It's a really good source of feedback, a very valuable tool. It gives you pats on the back; helps in setting goals for the next year.
> To me the whole idea of evaluation is good. If you're doing a good job, you can always improve.
> There have to be areas somebody could always do better. It is a very positive thing.
> The questionnaire is useful because once in a while you see a trend that you didn't think was there.
> The feedback from the questionnaires is valuable.
> Last year I took all of my classes and I handed it out to all of them, and I recorded everything ... I like feedback. I don't like to teach and not have feedback ... Every individual thing on that form that we are evaluated on helps you out. Generally the students give you a pretty good idea.

Although the teachers could see value in the school evaluation procedures, they were not convinced that the benefits were worth the effort. One noted that evaluation "takes away from more important work for the department head; facilitating the improvement of the program they offer." Others made similar comments such as although "evaluation is worthwhile, it is quite time consuming for the department head" and "I'm not convinced that teacher evaluation is worth the time and energy put into it."

This may have been because few of the teachers interviewed perceived the teacher evaluation procedures to be closely linked to their professional growth. In fact, when asked about what motivated them to change their teaching practices, teachers attributed only a minor role to evaluation procedures. This comment was typical:

> I get a lot of ideas from my colleagues. We sit down and talk together. It has just been a great department. I was never afraid to come and ask if I had a question. Inservices, conferences, the convention where you can get together ... I also get ideas from students for how to approach a topic or a unit.

Daily interaction with students and interactions with colleagues were by far the most frequently mentioned sources of motivation for major changes. Some teachers, however, did report minor changes due to feedback they received from the student perception instrument. One teacher, for example, reported that, because of feedback from the instrument, "I don't put as many demands on the students as I used to." Another who through the instrument found that many students felt that "he doesn't really care" reported having softened his approaches to students, and in particular not "getting mad" about illogical student responses in class.

Something about the impression that the teacher evaluation procedures were only a minor influence in motivating teachers at Westview to change does not ring true. The teachers simply felt too strongly about the validity of the student generated data, and had obviously thought deeply about the feedback they had received through the instrument. Perhaps the teacher who said "[our form of] evaluation is worthwhile. *Even if you don't go out and make changes you think about it subconsciously.*" was expressing the key idea. It is likely that decisions to change based on daily interaction with colleagues, or attendance at workshops, were at least informed, and possibly given their direction, by feedback from the student perception instrument. Indeed, it is probably impossible to disentangle the influence of teacher evaluation at Westview from other factors that motivate teachers to engage in efforts to improve instruction.

Almost certainly, however, the final decision as to whether to become involved meaningfully in the evaluation procedures at Westview (perhaps anywhere) resides with the teacher. For example, one teacher who seemed to have chosen not to become meaningfully involved claimed that students' comments were not very helpful at all. This teacher illustrated the point by noting that "one [student] said, 'Get rid of Shakespeare.'" The teacher responded "Well I'm not going to get rid of Shakespeare." This teacher seemed to dismiss the comment as simply ridiculous. Perhaps others might have taken the opportunity to wonder whether they could do a better job helping students see the value of Shakespeare. At the other extreme, one teacher reported having changed her entire 30-level program based on feedback from the student perception instrument. Perhaps the point is that teachers commit to different levels of engagement with teacher evaluation systems. At Westview, most teachers evidenced a relatively high level of engagement.

Initiative to Recognize Excellent Teachers

Early in 1991, a committee of four teachers was formed and provided with the following terms of reference:

1. Develop a set of criteria that could be used to measure teacher performance. (Keep these items objective.)
2. Obtain approval from staff.
3. Select a teacher committee of "highly respected" teachers who would select the recipients of a Teacher Associate position for outstanding teacher performance. [Along with the title, a Teacher

> Associate position carries with it an honorarium of approximately $2,500.00.]

The committee set about interviewing all teachers on staff in order to determine their general stance toward this initiative and to obtain their views as to appropriate criteria for selection of the teacher to receive the Teacher Associate position. At the time of data collection for this study, the committee was working to compile the results of the first set of interviews. Once they had done so and arrived at a statement that they felt reflected the staff position with respect to appropriate criteria and processes, as well as concerns, they had plans to conduct another round of interviews. The statement, refined through this process, was then to be presented at a staff meeting for approval.

The idea to recognize excellent teachers had originated with the principal. He felt that excellent teachers do not always get the recognition they deserve, and he wanted to institutionalize a formal mechanism for correcting that at Westview. He felt strongly enough about this that several years earlier he had awarded a Teacher Associate position without consultation with staff. As one staff member noted, that did not work out well:

> Two years ago [the principal] did award one. But he attached the role afterwards. He had just out of the blue assigned it. And the person who received it felt very alienated and refused the money, but did the job. It just caused hard feelings. It was because it wasn't set up properly. It wasn't communicated to people.

Even with this experience, the principal maintained his belief in the importance of recognizing excellent teachers. But he also recognized the need to turn the development and implementation of the process completely over to his staff. His musing about his arms-length relationship with the committee illustrated, once more, the dialectic he experienced as his strong beliefs and values were played out against his understanding of the need to involve people in important decisions: "I try my hardest to not get too involved. I guess my role is more supportive than anything else. I would support it because I can see nothing but good things coming out of it for kids. But I'm fully aware that I've got to be very cautious about how I support it because I could ruin it."

A shift in staff perception. The committee members reported having been concerned that from the outset there seemed to be very little staff support for this initiative. However, they sensed a gradual shift of opinion. One committee member noted:

> When we first started talking about it, it was very negative. I got the feeling that it was negative. People would say, "Oh, I don't want any part of that." But in going around to talk to them, very few are absolutely negative. Most people ... even if they don't strongly agree with it, they are not opposed to it so long as it is done fairly. I guess two things, as long as it is done fairly; as long as the process is clearly outlined at the start. And, of course, the collective agreement states that there must also be a role attached to this thing. And so they want that role up front before anything starts.

When asked why the staff attitude had shifted, this committee member said:

> Two things. I think first of all they realize that it is going to happen anyway, because I do believe that [the principal] is going to do this. So I think maybe they say, Well if you're going to do it, here's how we'd like you to do it. And I think that as well as once they found out more information. Because I think at first, they just think merit pay, and immediately they just kind of say I don't want anything to do with any part of that. But I think it has really helped us going to talk to them.

This quote captures two commonly expressed sentiments. The first is that staff generally perceived that this was a *fait accompli*. They saw this as something that the principal believed strongly in, and was not likely to abandon. The second was that the process used to develop the procedures for identification and selection had allowed them to come to terms with the initiative and to have a say in how to make the procedures workable at Westview.

Ambivalence remains. Even so, they remained ambivalent about the initiative. One teacher expressed the sentiments of many:

> I'm torn between thinking that it is a good thing to recognize excellence and try to pursue that, but I think people who do that naturally don't really look for a perk like this to make them do a better job. Maybe it's nice to be recognized. I think that they would feel that there are probably lots of people who in their quiet way do a lot more. They are not high profile in the school but they should also be recognized. So I'm sort of wondering how it is all going to come out in the wash. I think that they [the committee] are having a really hard time trying to come up with some formula or way of doing it fairly that will recognize everybody's ways of dealing with students.

The committee was well aware of the sources of this ambivalence. One, for example, said "Their big concern is that it will divide the staff. We're trying to set it up in such a way that it is as fair and consistent as possible." And this will be no mean feat. Many of those interviewed did not believe that a satisfactory process could be found. One, for example, said: "It becomes very difficult as to how you could identify [a Teacher Associate] when you are looking at the various programs that are being handled, and the great diversity of the students that are coming in ... Some years you may get a group of students that you cannot do much with." Another noted: "I have some skepticism. I still don't think that we can do it. Because there are a lot of really outstanding teachers on this staff." One of the committee members recalled a teacher being concerned that only high-profile teachers, such as those that coach football teams, would receive the award. Another teacher summarized his concerns in this manner: "It could be divisive, and that is something that we can't weigh. Because often people will only vocalize that unhappiness with people that they trust."

One of the committee members noted that several teachers had suggested alternatives to the awarding of a Teacher Associate position:

> The teachers would hate to see it being a monetary thing. They don't want a Teacher Associate. There were a couple of suggestions that I thought were really unique. [An example] from one of the teachers was that since this is for professional development, why don't we let the recipient select a conference of their choice anywhere in the known world, and let them go to that ... Or taking the money and turning it back to the department.

Positive spin-offs. One of the committee members felt that the process of attempting to define a process for identifying and recognizing excellent teachers had been of great benefit to the school. This person commented on what he believed to be evidence of school improvement due to the open discussion of excellence in teaching: "There are notices up around the school: 'Extra Help'... If you raise the level of consciousness among the teachers just that little bit, that is going to be positive." Another committee member felt that the process should go no further. This person, who described the experience of interviewing staff as "a real eye opener, because we're seeing a lot of the truer feelings of the staff," also claimed that "if nothing else comes out of our work, at least we have gained an increased awareness of what we should all be striving for." He felt that they had gained a collective picture of what people at Westview see as exemplary teaching.

The level of ambivalence notwithstanding, most staff felt that a process of identifying a Teacher Associate would be implemented. In stating this position, one committee member commented that "I think over a period of time, the comfort level will rise." This individual said this after stating that good communication would be essential and that people will have to know that the process is fair and not arbitrary.

Perspectives on Teachers Experiencing Difficulty

Teachers at Westview felt that the evaluation procedures in which they engaged were not related in any significant way to procedures that might be put in place to assist, or lead to the dismissal of, teachers experiencing difficulty due to lack of competence. The principal concurred. In fact, he felt that most often no formal process was necessary. He argued that the structure of the work provided a self-correcting environment for teachers experiencing difficulty:

> If a teacher is having a lot of trouble with a particular class or all of their classes for whatever reasons, it becomes almost unbearable to go to work ... They will either correct it, if the problem is a small one, and they can be corrected possibly with [the assistance of] the kids or [they can] seek help from administration or counseling or whomever. Now if it's a deeper problem, that might involve their actual effectiveness in terms of teaching, they will quite often resign, retire, take health leaves, whatever it is. And I have never seen that self-corrective thing kick in as often in other jobs as it does in teaching.

The principal also felt that the teachers who might be considered for dismissal because of poor performance were "so few" in number that it "would be a total waste of time" to orient school-wide teacher evaluation procedures toward them. He felt strongly that evaluation was "for positive gain, not for dismissal."

He also noted that there was no need to go searching for teachers who are experiencing serious difficulty; the circumstances of these few teachers are brought by students and parents to the attention of administrators. In his words:

> It's not like working on a job where you can kind of hide your ineffectiveness. Your ineffectiveness is most obvious and will not be tolerated in the classroom.

As the following comments illustrate, teachers were also aware of the informal communication networks through which these kinds of evaluative data are exposed within the school:

> The same people who maybe the kids know if they are not producing in the classroom as teachers, there is sort of the hidden unprofessional grapevine that tells horror stories.
>
> There is a "grapevine" in the school, largely sustained by students, which reports who is doing a good job in the school and who is not. Administration knows because they receive the requests for certain classes (and teachers) and requests from students that they not be assigned other teachers' classes.
>
> Administrators field complaints about teachers from students so "they get a feeling about a teacher"; they know what teachers the students try to avoid and which teachers are sought after.
>
> The person doing evaluations must understand that he is there to help, not to find bad teachers. We already know who is bad or is good, because the word gets around.

The staff at Westview seemed to be comfortable with the understanding that ineffective teachers would be identified through this informal communication network, and that each case would be dealt with individually according to its specific circumstances.

Discussion

From the outset, the Poplar Plains case study has aimed at identifying and documenting effective approaches to teacher evaluation. To this end, senior administrators from Poplar Plains were asked to identify three schools:

an elementary, a junior high, and a high school in which they perceived good things were happening in relation to teacher evaluation. And we found the schools to be as the senior administrators had judged them. We saw excellence in many areas, just one of which was teacher evaluation.

We believe that schools interested in examining their teacher evaluation procedures can benefit from careful consideration of the individual case studies. For example, high schools interested in using student perception data as a basis for teacher evaluation might build on the experiences at Westview. In the case studies we have endeavored to describe the school contexts in sufficient detail so that others can get a sense of the extent to which the particular teacher evaluation processes and our findings might be transferable to their settings. We commend readers with such interests to the sections of this report that address the appropriate case study. Much can be learned from each of them.

Here, however, we broaden the discussion somewhat. Through analysis of the three case studies, we have identified themes that we believe go some distance toward explaining the success of teacher evaluation in each of the schools studied. The themes relate to school culture, leadership, teachers as learners, structure, and locus of control.

School Culture

In each of the schools, teacher evaluation practices were inextricably interwoven into the fabric of the school. Teachers were able to isolate the practices for purposes of discussion, but did not experience them as separate from their lives in the schools. This was reflected in the comment of one of the principals who, having opened our research proposal for discussion during a staff meeting, reported:

> When you approached us to do this performance evaluation survey thing, we had to stop and think, "Now, what really is our process?" because it's just the way we do things. We don't think of it that much as performance evaluation.

This embeddedness of teacher evaluation into the overall school culture was evident in the everyday workings of each school. The teacher at Riverside who had her students engage in a goal setting and review cycle provides a clear example. There were many such examples in each school.

A corollary is that we found the exemplary teacher evaluation practices we observed to be embedded in healthy school organizations. Indeed, we are convinced that effective teacher evaluation practices will be found (and can be developed) only in schools with such healthy and positive cultures.

Cultural Themes

Although the schools were unique, they also seemed to share four themes that were near the core of cultural meaning in the schools. We believe that each of these cultural themes serves enabling functions in relation to teacher evaluation practices.

Commitment to student learning. In each of the schools, there was a strong commitment to student learning, a commitment evident in both word and deed. At Westview, for example, students are upstreamed even though this pulls down the test scores on the 10-level courses, and high schools are compared according to these scores. They do it because they believe that it is best for student learning. The energy that teachers at Riverside and Northwood direct toward staying current with effective pedagogical practices reflects a similar commitment. One teacher at Riverside noted:

> the teachers we have are very flexible in their outlook and are quite prepared to incorporate essentially whatever it takes in order to get the students moving along and having positive experiences ... We have very dedicated teachers trying to do the very best they can, sometimes to the detriment of ourselves.

Even though they recognized the personal costs of the efforts necessary to continually strive to improve pedagogical practices, teachers continue these efforts. They are convinced that such commitment is necessary to facilitate the best student learning.

High expectations. Staff at all three schools held and communicated high expectations for themselves, their students, and their colleagues. This is illustrated in a set of events described by one of the teachers from Riverside. She had taught a particular unit to "a class that was really good." But the students did not do as well as she thought they should on the end of unit evaluation exercise. After discussing this with her principal, she presented the problem to her class. She decided to reteach the unit, the students redid their goals, and together they set out to achieve a higher level on the unit. All expected more of themselves than they achieved the first time, and they achieved it.

Later, this same teacher when asked why she bothered changing her teaching practices said, "part of me is I always want to be the best, to strive to be the best teacher for these kids." The teachers in the three schools we studied had similar high expectations.

Shared understanding of what it means to be a teacher. In all three sites, staff shared an understanding of what it means to be a teacher. The understanding, however, differed somewhat from site to site. At Riverside, teachers worked long hours, maintained open classrooms, worked with colleagues, and implemented cutting-edge pedagogical practices. At Northwood, teachers worked in teams, shared resources, and practiced effective teaching strategies. At Westview, teachers provided extra help to students after class, worked to help students stay in the highest level courses possible, and shared ideas and resources with each other. The teachers at these sites knew that this was what teachers did and had bought into this shared understanding.

Mutual helping. In each of the schools, there was a feeling of being in it together, and this seemed to contribute to teachers willingly giving and receiving assistance. Goodlad's (1984) characterization of American teachers as isolated from colleagues simply did not hold for these schools.

Leadership

The relationships that each of the leaders had established with their teachers was central to the success of teacher evaluation practices. Westview's principal was seen as a visionary and hailed for having led the school out of decline. Northwood's principal was seen as a professional and knowledgeable educator. Riverside's principal was seen as an experienced, caring, and dedicated educator. And common among them was that their teachers *liked and trusted* them. Between teachers and principal was mutual personal and professional regard.

In each of the schools, there was also a match between the leadership style of the principal and the school culture. At Northwood and Westview the principals had played central roles in the development of the school culture, and at Riverside the recently appointed principal was philosophically and in his personal qualities, a good fit with the very positive extant culture. We believe that such a match is essential if teacher evaluation practices are to contribute positively to life in schools.

Teachers as Learners

Each of the schools had a strong culture of learning. Teachers were engaged in ongoing processes of professional growth. Our data suggest that teacher evaluation practices did play a role in their processes of professional development, but perhaps not as large a role as some might hope. It appears that two other factors, interaction with colleagues and daily feedback received from students, were far more influential. We believe that in relation to professional growth for teachers in each of the schools teacher evaluation played a useful, but relatively minor, role. For teachers at Riverside and Northwood, the goal setting process helped keep them focused, reminding them of some of the things they had intended to do. They felt accountable for achieving the goals they had set. But, most often, it was the dailyness of the work that motivated teachers to engage in substantial changes, and goal setting processes cannot predict the vagaries of that dailyness. The teachers at Westview looked to the student perception data as a confirmation that their own perceptions were accurate, but seldom initiated significant changes in practice based on this feedback. One teacher placed the teacher evaluation practices at Westview in perspective, suggesting that they allowed him to fine tune his practices.

Structure

Based on our analysis of the three case studies, we believe that there is no one best form or structure for teacher evaluation practices. Perhaps the only conclusion that we can venture in this area is that the teacher evaluation practices in particular schools should be consonant with the school culture. But our data do allow speculation about various general aspects of the structure of teacher evaluation.

In each of the schools we studied, teachers perceived a separation of evaluation for accountability and evaluation for personal growth. And they felt that their evaluation practices focused on personal growth. Indeed, several teachers made a point of telling stories about previous schools where they had worked and where the separation we are discussing was not present. Invariably, the point of their stories was to convey disdain for the practices in the previous school and to illustrate how they were able to "put on a show" for the administrator at evaluation time. In the systems where evaluation for accountability and evaluation for personal growth were not structurally separated, teachers seemed to engage in the process as a kind of a game rather than as a professional development experience.

Although evaluation for accountability and evaluation for personal growth were structurally separated in the schools we studied, teachers felt a strong *internal* sense of accountability. This seemed to relate to an unspoken norm of competence that existed in each of the schools. Teachers experienced this cultural norm as a form of internal professional accountability. They held themselves responsible for achieving the high standards implied in the norms.

A similar comment can be made about teachers' views of systems that emphasize evaluation as a mechanism for external motivation or control. In the schools we studied, teachers did not perceive evaluation practices in this way. But they had stories of previous schools where they did perceive that evaluation practices were designed to motivate and control them. And again, in those circumstances teachers tended to approach teacher evaluation as a game to be "won," but once won to be dismissed as irrelevant.

At Riverside, Northwood, and Westview we found a clear understanding between principals and teachers that teachers in difficulty would be handled differently than other teachers. That is, the evaluation practices would be different for teachers in difficulty. Again, this reflects the implicit assumptions of competence that the structures of the evaluation practices at these three schools contain. We believe that this allows teachers to maintain their professional images as they engage in evaluation practices. They are not being tested to determine whether they pass; they are participating in a process of professional growth.

The teachers and principals involved in this study were adamant that it is not necessary to have formal channels to identify teachers in difficulty. They felt that when a teacher was experiencing severe problems informal channels of information ensured that principals and teachers were aware. Student and parent complaints, noise from the classroom, number of students sent to the office for discipline, and the general deportment of the teacher in difficulty are only a few of the ways in which such circumstances are brought to the attention of administrators. One principal felt this so strongly that he asserted that it would be immoral to design evaluation practices for the purpose of identifying teachers in difficulty. For him, professional growth was the only reasonable purpose for teacher evaluation practices.

In these three schools, instruments and procedures played a secondary role in teacher evaluation practices. More central to the success of the practices were the relationships that existed between principals and teachers and the quality of the interactions that followed whatever evaluation procedures were in place. We believe that, irrespective of the sophistication of instruments and procedures, if these somewhat intangible relational qualities are not in place, evaluation data are not likely to contribute to teacher growth.

Locus of Control

We found teachers who felt a great deal of control over the teacher evaluation practices in their schools. Each year they had opportunities to amend the overall process, and in the process they had control over the data that were collected and the interpretation of those data. In these circumstances, teachers were not only willing to engage in demonstrating their work, they were enthusiastic about doing so. We believe that this was so because they were allowed internal control over their assessment.

Our study focused on schools with exemplary teacher evaluation practices. One observation that we can share with confidence is that in the schools we studied most teachers engaged in the teacher evaluation practices with enthusiasm and with serious intent to learn. But a few teachers did not. These few distanced themselves from the process and treated it as somewhat of an exercise. We believe that this reflects a tenet that will hold in relation to any system of teacher evaluation in any school: *Regardless of the nature of teacher evaluation practices in a school, teachers choose the extent to which they will invest themselves in the process.* Schools can design positive teacher evaluation practices that invite teachers to participate meaningfully, but the decision to do so will always remain with individual teachers.

These schools provide excellent examples of schools where the focus is on learning and where, with skilled leadership, staff willingly work together to extend their own professional competence and provide quality education for their students.

Notes

1. The Academic Challenge Program (ACP) is a district funding category for which students in the top one percentile are eligible. This assignment is based on intellectual ability and performance on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. Each school is responsible for developing programs for its ACP students. At Riverside School, the classroom teachers share this responsibility with a specialist teacher who has 0.3 of her assignment to offer a "pull-out program" for the school's ACP students.
2. In Poplar Plains Public School District, the curriculum coordinator is a senior teacher on the school staff appointed by the principal to take on administrative and leadership responsibilities and is assigned released time to perform these duties. The curriculum coordinator's role in an elementary school seems to be very similar to that of an assistant principal.
3. The remaining support staff are as follows: 1.8 secretarial, 0.5 program aide in the kindergarten, the head custodian, a full-time custodial assistant, and a second custodial assistant who works half time. In addition, the school budgets provides for 1.5 FTE program aide time that is assigned directly to teachers. That is, each teacher is assigned 150 hours of program aide time between October 1 and May 31. The teacher is permitted to select the person who will work with him or her as an aide. The aides are not assigned administrative tasks. They are assigned to work directly with students. This provides for "a lot of one-on-one attention," Principal Watson stated.

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Chapter 9

A Case Study of the County of Wildflowers

The County of Wildflowers is a mid-sized jurisdiction offering a wide range of programs at all levels.

The researchers contacted the superintendent in June of 1991 to discuss the possibility of doing a case study of the jurisdiction. The request was approved and an early September meeting was arranged in which the researchers met with the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the French immersion consultant to discuss the purposes of the study and to make arrangements for entry into the schools. Two schools offering immersion programs were identified by the superintendent as sites for the case study.

Both schools are dual-track schools offering both immersion and regular English programs from kindergarten to grade 6 and are administered by male, unilingual principals. The French immersion programs have a relatively long history in these schools, and these programs have generally been viewed as successful by both the school and the parents of immersion students.

District Teacher Evaluation Policy

The Superintendent of the County of Wildflowers indicates that the teacher evaluation policy in the school district is similar to that of other school jurisdictions. They follow very closely the prototype guidelines obtained from Alberta Education. The evaluation policy has been in effect for the last 10 years with only minor changes having occurred in the last five years. The change has been in the greater involvement of principals in the evaluation process. Although the superintendent can become involved in the evaluation process, evaluation is usually left in the hands of the principals. Principals are given latitude in the process of formative evaluation, although standard forms are used for reporting. In summative evaluation, for purposes of termination of employment, the process is tightened up and becomes more standardized.

According to the superintendent, the role of the principal has changed in recent years. Less emphasis is placed on being a disciplinarian of students and a manager, and more emphasis is placed on instructional leadership. Evaluation as part of instructional leadership is a new role for principals. The superintendent affirms that once the initial resistance of principals being involved in evaluation was "gotten over with," principals and teachers were able to see in formative evaluation a perspective for development. It has come to be seen as a tool for teachers to develop collectively and individually in the schools. He acknowledges, however, that evaluation for instructional improvement takes a lot of time. The evaluator needs not only to have developed good interpersonal relationships with staff but also to have gained credibility. The principal does not have an easy task.

According to the superintendent, evaluation has three major purposes: affirming the work of the teacher, diagnosing areas for growth, and establishing a teacher profile or record. He states:

> To me, there are three things that happen in evaluation. First, when an employee becomes comfortable with the whole notion of evaluation, the fact that they have a record, that somebody has taken the time to put on paper that they are doing a good job is really an affirming kind of exercise. That's very valuable to the employee. Second, the fact that you can use evaluation for diagnostic purposes. One can say "here are some areas that you can examine as potential areas for growth" and we can set something up at the school or as individuals you can attend seminars to develop your skills in that area. Third, and this is probably the one that initiated evaluation in the first place and is the one that is least used is the business of developing a profile or record that over time an individual has been successful in teaching. But it is the first two that are of most importance.

The superintendent is firmly committed to the fact that every person in the system must be first and foremost a learner. He points to a quote, part of a mission statement on excellence in schools affixed to the wall in his office, in which emphasis is placed on being a learner. Statements of commitment are identified by the superintendent each year and circulated in a document to principals and teachers. This year the chief commitment was that the system must be a learning organization. Each person must be a learner. In his words:

> to be a learner means you have to make commitments. This implies that there will be an element of study and reflection on your teaching practices. We need to emphasize this aspect more than you have to be evaluated. There is a lot of lost energy in evaluation.

In sharing these commitments with his staff, the superintendent hopes that there will be a meshing of the schools' goals with district goals.

Gaining Entry

The principals of Marigold and Bluebell schools agreed to participate in the study, and meetings were arranged with the French immersion teachers. Ten teachers from Bluebell school and seven from Marigold school attended the first meeting, which was scheduled immediately after school in late October. At the first meeting, it was important that the researchers gain the confidence and trust of the teachers. The researchers presented themselves, their role in the research, the purposes of the study, and the role of the teachers. They stressed the importance of getting at the impact of evaluation on the classroom teacher. The teachers were encouraged to view themselves as collaborators in the research process, and emphasis was placed on their voluntary participation. The researchers tried to establish their role as learners to help the teachers feel more comfortable and to assure them that the research was not an evaluation either of them or of the school. On many occasions the researchers expressed to the participants that they wanted to know what evaluation was like from their point of view. Confidentiality and anonymity were continually assured by the researchers.

Discussion sessions were held in each of the two schools with a group of immersion teachers on four separate occasions—November, December, January, and February. As participation was voluntary, numbers of teachers attending the discussion sessions varied depending on the demands on their time. In general, six teachers participated from Marigold School and four teachers from Bluebell School. An individual interview was conducted with the principals of both schools and the superintendent of the County of Wildflowers.

Although the first session with the teachers was semi-structured, the nature of the subsequent discussion sessions depended on the information given by the teachers in the previous session and in their stories about evaluation. The participants were given copies of major ideas that had emerged from the previous discussion and asked how they felt about the information presented. The responses made by the teachers provided the cues for questions by the researchers. The nature of the study commanded that the sessions be flexible, open-ended, and nondirective.

The teachers were also invited to participate in the project by sharing three stories about evaluation: (a) remembering an evaluation experience, theirs or others', (b) living through an evaluation experience, and (c) talking about a professional development experience. Twenty teacher stories were received. Although most stories were written, a few were presented orally on tape. At the first discussion session with the teachers in November, a timeline was presented for the collection of the stories (December, January, February). These stories often became a catalyst for discussion at the next group session with the teachers.

The researchers also kept a field journal that contained their reflections and interpretations based on the observations and discussions they had had with the participants. The researchers would always take time after an interview session to share reflections and to jot down their observations. The attempt to make conceptual sense of the events observed and related provided a number of foci to guide the researchers through the data. These notes served as a preliminary analysis to help recreate the original mood and setting in which the discussion had taken place. It must be noted that the use of two researchers assured an exchange of viewpoints and a more complete observation, providing one of the methodological advantages of the project.

The analysis of the data resulted in the identification of major themes in both the teachers' stories and the principals' stories on evaluation. The themes identified provide the beginnings of an understanding of the meanings that both the teachers and the principals attach to their evaluation experiences. Each researcher separately analyzed the data and identified emergent categories, thus assuring that only what was seen by both researchers was presented to the teachers. Teachers were encouraged to elaborate on the categories presented, make changes, and add clarifications. Every attempt was made to corroborate the categories with the participants. After the final analysis, we returned to the field for member-checking. The two principals and a represenative teacher from each school were given a preliminary first draft of the findings and of the interpretations given by the researchers.

It is important to note that although this report is a case study of participants working in an immersion program in two schools in the County of Wildflowers, the participants' beliefs and understandings of evaluation were often shaped by previous experiences of evaluation in other settings. Although the findings are presented in two separate sections, many of the themes overlap and are similar in both the teachers' and the principals' stories. The following is an attempt to describe and interpret the themes and to present this information in narrative form supported by evidence from statements made by the participants.

Teachers Speak About Evaluation

The Evaluation Process

The teachers interviewed spoke extensively of the evaluation process: how they prepared for the experience, how they prepared the evaluator, how the evaluator behaved in the classroom during the evaluation, and their reactions to the process.

Preparing for Evaluation

Teachers spend hours on extra cleaning and preparing before an evaluation. They will prepare their unit plans, and their lesson plans will be written in great detail. Even the more experienced teachers put in a lot of extra effort.

> It's a lot more work when he comes in. You have to be well prepared. I spent hours preparing.
>
> I make sure that my lesson plans are in order. If they are written in pencil, I recopy them in ink, just for me. I think

> of what I'm going to do on the day he comes in. Like if it's Sunday, I think of where I will be in four days. I think about it the night before.
>
> The weekend before evaluation I spent hours cleaning my class and recopying my long-term plan in science [from pencil to ink]. Then I made sure that my unit plans were clean and complete.
>
> The morning of the evaluation, I dress up for the occasion. If I look good, I feel good.

Teachers not only prepare themselves, they prepare their students. Teachers also ensure that the evaluator knows what to expect. Some take upon themselves the responsibility of informing the evaluator, of explaining how they will proceed.

> I have a group of kids that are like my own children. They go completely crazy when visitors come in. It's frustrating. I told them today that the principal was coming in two to three days and that we would now practice the unfolding of the lesson.
>
> I tell the kids that the principal evaluates the children every year. I told them, show off for the principal.
>
> The morning of the evaluation, the principal and I went over my lesson in great detail. This meeting was necessary and helpful. It enabled me to put the lesson into perspective and also to give the principal a fair shot at understanding.
>
> When he/she comes in, the evaluator should know the ongoing sequence of the lesson and what is going to happen. Why do I have an envelope full of things, activities?
>
> The evaluator should know your objectives and see a written plan.

Both teachers who reported positive and negative evaluation experiences spent much time preparing. When asked why they prepared so extensively, one teacher answered that it was a question of doing one's best and of being a professional.

Formal Evaluation

During the group discussions, we asked the teachers to describe the evaluation process as they have lived it or are living it presently. How does evaluation work and what are some of your experiences? Some of the stories are detailed descriptions of the evaluation process that teachers have experienced or are presently experiencing; others are more sketchy. We note that the evaluation process carried out in the schools is consistent with school district policy.

> During the first year of teaching in this school board, we are observed on several occasions without warning, that is to say that we may expect several unexpected visits. After that, on a fixed time they come to observe in a more formal manner. At that time, they take notes on the lesson in question, and then they offer suggestions for improvement. In the following years, you are evaluated every three years. It is done in the same manner with many visits and so on.
>
> Formal evaluation in our school works this way. The principal calls a meeting with you. He begins by welcoming the teacher to the staff or by saying how pleased he is to see you back for another year. Then the evaluation is discussed in detail. He states what he is looking for and gives you two hand-outs going over the steps, for example the seven steps to a complete lesson plan. He ensures that you understand the steps and then sets a date two or three weeks later at a mutually convenient time. After the evaluation, he meets with the teacher the same day after school. The meeting begins with what he saw in each part. All comments are positive. The teacher is always asked if what was observed was what actually happened. A written summary follows the next day and all observations are positive, plus additional lines are added specifying other professional contributions to the staff.

Evaluating Evaluation

Teachers generally seem to agree that evaluation is necessary. It is a way of establishing standards and controls and of being accountable. You need to have some measure of control. You need to control the quality of teaching.

> Evaluation is a way of maintaining a certain standard. Without evaluation, teachers may do as they please in the classroom. From time to time, there are people who should not be in the classroom and how are you going to find them?
>
> Evaluation makes you accountable. It is also a justification of our salary. It would be so easy to work in our own small world behind closed doors, without contact. It is so easy to stop working. We work with people and not with objects or paper. As a parent, I want to know that my children are protected. We have the obligation to present what we try to do with students.

Not all teachers, however, have experienced evaluation as a useful tool for them personally. Teachers share their perceptions and feelings about some of the bad experiences they have had in previous years.

> I have the impression that evaluation is worthless. I believe that many teachers view it as having no effect. You never see the result of evaluation.
>
> The school principal evaluated me, the only time that he did all year and his report was sent to Alberta Education. It was a waste of time for him and for me. It's too bad that his report is still in my file somewhere.
>
> Two weeks later, he gave me a copy of his report, no consultation, no comments, no conference.
>
> He observed me 15 minutes and left a small evaluation in my mailbox.
>
> This principal was new to the position. She would go in to evaluate people, full of pomp and circumstance and writing all these things. We wouldn't hear a word from her

> and then we would get these written things full of the negative.

Evaluation has been a positive experience for some teachers. They view it as a way of ensuring their professional development. It is a source of encouragement and reassurance.

> For me, evaluation is a good thing. It's a good idea, not just to see the teacher but to see what is happening in our classroom. For me it is necessary. If you play a sport, you need to know how to improve. I like getting ideas. Evaluation is a critique of you as a teacher. After evaluation I know that I am on the right path. Evaluation is important. But what is more important is what comes after, where you go from there.

> I like it that the principal knows what is happening in my classroom. It's a kind of dialogue, a sharing.

> Now it is a really good format the way he does it. What we did initially, we had a preconference. He asked me in and told me what he was looking for. So he came into my classroom. I felt really at ease with this. I gave him what he wanted to see, but at the same time maintaining the regular structured routine that I have in my classroom.

> After that, we had a postconference and we met. He liked what he had seen and we checked for what he was looking for in the class. I had met the requirements.

> His approach is very positive, very relaxed. If you are not at ease on that day you pick another day. It's the period that you want. It is not an evaluation to bring you down. It's a process that you must do, a control but it is not a process structured in such a way as to bring out the negative aspects. The process is democratic and honest.

> In this school, evaluation is a good experience. It is not so much an evaluation as a pat on the back. You are doing fine, continue. Even people who have taught 20 years need this.

When teachers talk about evaluation, there are many contrasting opinions depending on the good or bad experiences they have had. Although all believe that there is a need for evaluation in order to filter out those who should not be in the profession, not all teachers believe that formal evaluation has had an important effect on them or on their teaching. It is important to try to discover the reasons behind the beliefs and judgments expressed by the teachers. Why in some instances is evaluation considered to be so beneficial, and why is it viewed in other instances as being useless?

Evaluating the Evaluators

In the evaluation process, teachers judge the evaluators. Issues of trust and credibility are raised. Teachers insist that teacher evaluation be done by competent people who know the profession and the subject area. Parent and student input must be respected, but teachers should evaluate teachers. One teacher would like to have the power in her profession that she feels the medical profession has.

> I like to look at it like the medical profession. The doctor is in control. At the same time he [sic] is closely watched by the medical association. And if he steps out of line he is down the road. But I don't feel if I make a judgment I have the same kind of respect and of liberty as a medical doctor would have.

Teachers want the evaluator to come in more often to their classroom. More frequent visits would help the evaluator know them and their teaching better.

> They should come in a lot more often than they do. They should base their judgment on many visits. It might be less stressful if the principal came in several times. I was expecting many more informal observations in my class.

> They must come several times to see the year as a whole.

Teachers would also like more feedback from the evaluators. They mention the need to be visited more frequently, not so much to be evaluated but to receive help. Teachers need to know if they are on the right track, especially beginning teachers.

> You need feedback. I'm just beginning and I would like feedback to put me in the right direction.

> They are not specific enough. They will say it is going well or this was well done, but I often find that they lack specific suggestions on how I could improve.

> It would be nice if the evaluators became more involved in the lesson when they came in, for example, looking at the work of the students.... It would make me feel more at ease.

In summary, while being evaluated the teachers also observe the observer. They will notice how much the evaluator writes, what he looks at, what he does, how long he stays, and so forth. In a sense, they watch him watching them. The evaluator may be in the background, but he is not unobtrusive. The observer cannot escape the fact that he is a stranger, a visitor in that classroom. The evaluator's presence changes the ambience of the classroom.

The Evaluator Doesn't Know

No matter how positive the evaluation experience, there is a sense by the teachers that the evaluator *doesn't know*. Every class has its particular culture, its way of being, and the evaluator is a visitor in this world. He does not understand the language of this particular class, nor does he know their ways of being, of relating, of progressing.

> There are different moments in teaching and they happen anytime. A student discovers something. They help one another and these things are hard to explain or to describe.

> We are different people depending on the group. I like myself less with this group because they are always test-

> ing me. I'm doing well but I can't rest and have fun. I am happy that this is the fifth group and not the first. For this year, I am biding my time.

> The evaluator cannot grasp the progress of the children. He can't see where the student was a week, a month ago. If a teacher has a student with a strange family history, she needs to be a teacher, a mother, a policeman, everything. You must interpret the behavior of the child in a certain context.

> What I find difficult when you are in class and the evaluator is evaluating a lesson is that there are so many other questions besides the sequence and the objectives. What is the personality of these 23 children in class? How must you change the way of presenting a concept because these children are there? The evaluator does not know this. He doesn't know how these kids react in a certain situation. It is very, very artificial.

In a French immersion situation, not knowing also includes not knowing the French language, the language of instruction in the classroom. A teacher relates a story about one of her colleagues in a school where she worked previously.

> This teacher had six months of teaching experience in the classroom. She learnt that Alberta Education had decided to evaluate all the kindergarten classes in the region. She was a bit worried. The evaluator came and spent an hour with us and sat down with my colleague and told her that her work was not worth much. Although this teacher did not have much experience and in spite of the fact that she was young, she was one of the best teachers that I have ever seen. Of course this evaluation left her discouraged, devastated, and depressed. A few months later, the same evaluator came back for a second formal evaluation. This time, however, she highly praised my colleague's work. As it turned out, her first visit had been a first visit in an immersion kindergarten. After seeing the others she now thought that my colleague was one of the best. It's a good thing my colleague had enough confidence to continue.

When the teacher has a chance to explain what she or he will do or has done, the problem of not knowing the French language is seen as being less serious. Knowing and appreciating the evaluator seems to help as well, because the teacher feels that he or she can be trusted, not only to understand what is happening in the classroom, in spite of the language barrier, but also to take the time to inform themselves of the content of the lesson.

> I thought it would be a problem with the language, but I went over my complete lesson with him before teaching. I think it went very well. I think that he understood the lesson very well.

> He does not understand French but he is capable of understanding what is happening in the classroom.

> He can see the techniques even if he does not understand. He can see how things work in the classroom.

The question of not knowing the language does have its disadvantages. The teacher has more work. The lesson plan must be translated and explained.

> I had written my lesson plan out in English and we discussed the components in English even though the entire lesson was to to be taught in French.

> You have to explain to the principal what is happening because he doesn't know what we are saying. There is the language element, so you must write the lesson in English and you must explain exactly what is going to happen so that he knows what you are doing. So it is still another preparation to do for him.

Although the teachers felt that the evaluator was able to evaluate the lesson, there was a sense of alienation on the part of the teachers. Not only does the evaluator not understand the language of the class, that is to say, the way of relating particular to that world, he does not understand the language of communication used by the students and the teacher to exchange the small between-the-lines messages that make this classroom a particular situation. One teacher feels somewhat cheated because the principal cannot read her long-term and unit plans.

> It was at this point that I realized that the principal didn't understand and wouldn't understand the small between-the-lines communication between myself and the students.

> I had prepared a written plan of a lesson for the formal evaluation. I had to change course. I had a good reason. I could see a student who did not understand, so we went back and did something else. And if the principal does not speak French, he doesn't know exactly what is happening. If you did not have the chance to explain he would say, "Hey, this is not what she gave me!"

> The principal saw my long-term plan and my unit plans. I would have really liked that he could have read them. But I'm sure that all of this was strange ... like Chinese for him. What could he have said?

Feelings

Teachers with positive evaluations feel good about what they do. They feel confident and competent, supported, and trusted.

> Walking out of the office, not only was I relieved to be done the evaluation but I felt extremely confident and competent as a teacher. It was a most positive and rewarding experience.

> I want again to stress the importance of the principal's positive attitude during this meeting. I felt as though I had his full support and trust. This set the tone for a successful evaluation.

> The principal said something that I will hold onto dearly for the rest of my career. I believe it to be the most significant part of my evaluation. He simply stated that I was a good teacher and that I had nothing to worry about.

> This statement restored my confidence. I was back on track.

Whether the teachers feel that the experience of evaluation has been positive or negative, they all feel stressed by the experience. In our view this stress occurs because the evaluator, no matter how positive he or she may be, is still the visitor and there are so many aspects of the lesson he or she may not like, or he or she may not understand. The evaluator has entered the teacher's world. It is a precise moment and it carries a value judgment. So many things can go wrong.

> I remember this evaluation because it created a lot of anxiety for me and I was very nervous all the time I taught the lesson.
>
> I find it stressful not only because of the evaluator. There is always someone observing you. How are the children going to react?
>
> I clearly remember sitting in the principal's office before he arrived and suddenly experiencing an anxiety attack. My first year as a teacher meant that I was no longer under another's protective wing. I realized that this evaluation was nothing like the evaluations during student teaching. I must have thought of 101 items he might want to evaluate.
>
> There is less stress with age. If you are old like me you are not so stressed. You know you can improve but it it not the end of the world. Maturity helps you to see it this way.

Power, Control, and Freedom

The question of control is important for teachers. Teachers want to control the immediate circumstances of their evaluation: the time, the place, the lesson that is to be evaluated. They want the power to decide what aspect of their teaching they need to work on. Freedom of choice and control, however, is not perceived as being present in most situations.

> In this school, we are empowered. I have been in many schools and I have been under many principals and this is not the norm. This principal gives a lot of control and power and freedom and when someone gives you that much freedom, you almost don't use your freedom because you are afraid of abusing it.

Two subthemes related to the larger theme of power, control, and freedom are knowing or not knowing what to expect and knowing the evaluator.

Knowing or Not Knowing What to Expect

Teachers need to know what will occur in the evaluation process. Not knowing is viewed as a threatening experience. They like to feel that they have some control over the situation. Even teachers with many years of teaching experience may feel pangs of insecurity when they don't know what to expect. The teachers in both schools felt positive about evaluation when they felt that they were prepared. Knowing the when, the how, and the who gave teachers ownership in the process.

> I know what to expect because he gave us the list. I know what I have to hand in. I have planned well and I know that he wants a strong math program.
>
> He prepares you. He tells you on what he will evaluate you. He meets you before and reviews the lesson with you and he meets you after.
>
> He gave me two weeks notice, which I appreciated, and he gave me a precise time and date.
>
> I will be evaluated shortly, and I showed you the document that we prepared. He told me what he wants so it is almost impossible to fail.
>
> I decided it was time. I wanted to get this evaluation out of the way because report cards were just around the corner. Here I have control over my evaluation.

The teachers in the two schools contrasted the experience of knowing with the experience of not knowing, which some of them had experienced in other settings.

> You don't know when they will come in. When you are given a position, it is not explained how you will be evaluated or when. People come into your classroom for 10 minutes and then they leave and you never hear anything.
>
> I was given a big manual to read on how I was to be evaluated. I have not had the time to look at it. It is not very structured.
>
> He came into my classroom to see what I was doing, but I don't know if it was formal or informal or if it was his intention to give me some feedback.

I Know the Evaluator

It is important to underline the fact that teachers who consider their evaluation experiences as being positive also speak positively of the principal/evaluator. The relationship that they have with the principal makes a difference. When the evaluator is seen as a person with qualities and faults, one they can relate to, the evaluation experience is generally viewed as being positive.

> He is not afraid to speak of his faults and of his faux pas. He speaks of this often. This makes him more human. We are then less afraid. He is not Superman.
>
> He shows his emotions. He is charismatic. Teaching is his life.
>
> What impresses me of this man is that if you make a mistake he backs you right away. You are always right. He is there to support you in all that you do.

Administrators who have trouble relating and those who have too many expectations are viewed negatively and encourage defiance. Teachers remember their professional and evaluation experiences with these administrators as being negative.

> When you have somebody who hammers at you on everything and has 1000 rules, you spend the lonely hours of the morning thinking on how you can outfox them because it's defiance.

When related to the question of power, control, and knowledge, it is easy to see that teachers who do not know what will happen, or how evaluation will be done, can feel threatened by the experience. Those who have little control in the evaluation process may feel victimized. Those who are given the time to prepare appreciate it, just as in everyday life one appreciates the time to prepare the house and oneself for a dinner party. Unexpected dinner guests cause one to feel uncomfortable. Knowledge is security and power over one's own world. Evaluators who make sure that the teacher knows about the evaluation, how and when it will be done, are in fact saying that they respect the teacher's world and that they acknowledge the teacher's control and sense of ownership of that world.

Teachers Want Professional Development

These teachers want to learn, to change, and to grow. They are not afraid to speak of the fact that they seek help from various sources. Some take full responsibility for their growth. They actively seek ways and means of transforming their teaching. They buy books, observe others, analyze their own teaching, and generally try to seek new ways of being and of seeing. Others may not search so actively, but they profit from shared experiences gathering ideas, resources, courage, and confidence.

Learning from others is important to these teachers. They feel that they learn when they interact with other teachers. Teachers help one another better understand students. Their conversations seem to dwell mainly on relationships between students and between students and themselves.

> We talk with each other. With teacher X, I talk about how to help students, to improve relationships, about the parents.
>
> I have X's students and I talk a lot with him. It helps me a lot. It is more concrete. I know the students that he talking about and I know how they are. He gives me suggestions.

Some teachers compare their professional development experiences with evaluation experiences and find the latter to be the less helpful.

> It is more beneficial to meet with other teachers on staff and with other schools than with the evaluator.
>
> What I receive from the evaluator and what I receive from my co-workers are not the same. If I speak with teacher X it is because I want to know more. I want to do something for me in this condition to improve my situation. When the principal speaks with me it is at another level. It is not the same thing.
>
> In my experience, I have had professional development experiences that have given me much more than any formal evaluation experience that I have had.

Professional development is not closely linked to evaluation in the eyes of the teachers. Evaluation is seen as an event at a precise time. It is not generally viewed as an ongoing process.

> Evaluation tells you that at this precise moment you are here. It tells you today, here what is working and not working. Evaluation is limited to a precise moment in time and to a judgment made on your teaching according to precise criteria that you receive. On the other hand, professional development is a long-term thing, a global thing. It continues every day. It is a growth process.

These teachers often see evaluation as a way of controlling quality, of ensuring that the right people are in the classroom. As necessary as it may seem, evaluation is not always a positive growth experience. Teachers do recognize, however, that professional development can come about as a result of evaluation.

> Evaluation and professional development are related. They go hand in hand. Evaluation is part of professional development. When the evaluator visits my classroom and evaluates me on such and such, I can then develop this aspect of my teaching.

For some teachers, self-evaluation is the most valid mechanism for change: "I am my most demanding evaluator. I know what I must do." The important questions that arise are how to render evaluation more of a professional development experience. Under what conditions can the evaluation process foster change and growth in the teacher?

Principals Speak About Evaluation

The evaluators spoke extensively about evaluation. They defined it and spoke of its importance. They described how they prepare themselves to do evaluation, how they do evaluation, and how they view the different types of evaluation. They spoke of their role as administrators/evaluators, and about working with district policy. They spoke of emotions, creating relationships, and bringing about change and learning.

The Structure of Evaluation

The principals follow district policy in the processes involved in a formal visit. The following components are part of district policy and are closely followed by the two principals: classroom observation(s) by the evaluator, a subsequent conference with the teacher, and a written summary by the evaluator with an opportunity for the teacher to sign and comment on the written summary. In the two schools in this study, a preconference with the teacher prior to a classroom observation was part of the process. Each of the components of the evaluation process is described in the

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words of the principals, as well as a prior phase, the preparation for evaluation.

Preparing for Evaluation

These principals take their responsibility seriously and they prepare for it carefully. They acknowledge that evaluation takes up a large part of their time.

> I evaluate every one of my teachers every year and every one of my teachers gets a written report that goes to County office.

They attempt to have a broader understanding of the teacher's actions. They do not limit themselves to the one performance observed.

> I just don't go into the classroom and write for 40 minutes. I do a lot of work in advance.
>
> I have all the year plans on file. I take a look at the teacher's year plan. I look at what they file to give me some background information. I do drop-in visits repeatedly back and forth in the classrooms so I have a good idea of what is occurring in the classroom, the kind of management they have, whereabouts they are in the subject area. So I prepare myself with going through that. I review the hand-out that I give my staff.

The principals are aware that evaluation is extra work for them and for the teachers. They have, after all, asked the teachers to show them their best.

> I think teachers put an awful lot of effort into it. The lesson plan is probably a lot more thoroughly done. More thought has gone into the lesson. They prepare things probably with a little bit extra: the projector comes out, more colored pens and pencils and colored chalk and those sort of things.

The principals have not, in their interviews, linked extra preparation with the fear of failure or the need to be seen as a professional, the latter comment having been made by teachers.

The Preconference

The preconferences are used as an opportunity to have teachers explain what they will do in the lesson. Teachers are invited to identify specific areas of concern that the evaluation could address, but few do. In some cases, the principal informs the teachers of what is expected of them.

> Every teacher at the beginning of the year gets this package [a hand-out on evaluation].
>
> I expect teachers to have read it [a hand-out on evaluation] and everybody to use these terms and use them as they are defined in the package. That way we have somewhere to come from. It's defined and it's safer for them. It is not scattered.
>
> It is important that you label things. Because if I have to take a teacher to a board of reference or something, I have to have my terms down. I have to talk to them. We have to have some common understandings. It's not fair for me to say you didn't do an anticipatory set and the teacher says "I don't know what that is. You never told me. I call it introductory to the lesson. You never said anything about my introduction."

In others the preconference is more of a dialogue, a time when information is shared.

> I sit down with the teacher ahead of time and we go through the lesson plan to various degrees.
>
> How detailed I go through with them depends on the lesson and the teacher. I ask them to explain where it fits in the big picture, whether I am going to see something new, something they should integrate. I try to have the teacher tell me the specific changes and behaviors that they expect the students to exhibit because of the lesson.
>
> I ask if there is any specific area that you wish some observation on. In most cases the response is: "Oh no, just come in." So I go in carte blanche.

The Formal Classroom Visit

During the classroom visit, principals often use checklists, on-task charts, diagrams, and script taking to aid them in their evaluation.

> I just use an observe/not observe/doesn't apply as far as the checklist goes.
>
> I do script taking, just generally taking notes on a time basis. In an evaluation I just finished, I used a diagram of the classroom. It's where the teacher tended to move. There were some discipline situations here. At one point there was a scatter question so I monitor it. I note for myself different kinds of things that I see in the classroom that I think are positive. And if I don't script, I sit there and observe and write down a few notes. That is the expectations of what I do on a formal visit.

One principal includes an evaluation of students in his assessment of the teacher. The feedback from students has been gathered in the informal visits made to the classroom prior to the formal visit.

> When I evaluate my teachers I usually include an evaluation of my students, like this year with the math program. I will sit at a table in the classroom and each child will come to me with their books and they talk to me about the math program and why their books are like this. It's important because it is one of the few things that we can measure as parents. I always tell my teachers, I will be sitting in your classroom now for two hours just looking at the notebooks. I'm going to hear you teach. I'm going to be able to see the interactions going on with students. I'm going to get their perspective as to their books.

The Postconference

In some cases, the teacher and principal meet after the classroom visit in order to go through the lesson and discuss the principal's observations. In others, the teacher awaits the evaluation write-up from the principal.

> We have a meeting as soon as possible after the script taking and I go through the lesson as much as possible using the terms and what I see as my observations for the evaluation. The terminology that I use has been given to my staff members at the beginning of the year. I point out these kinds of things: individualization here, lots of routines, pacing of things, combination of verbal and non-verbal.
>
> Within three to five days, depending on my schedule, I do the evaluation write-up and give it to the teacher. Ask them for their comments. They sign it and I begin again. If there are areas that need to be worked on we address them at that particular point.

The Written Report

The principals recognize the importance and the weight of written reports.

> As an administrator/evaluator you have to be very careful about what you write, because what you write about a person is there for life. It is not a conversation between you and me. It becomes public information. It's in your file. What is down there is down there and in the evaluation you ask the teacher to sign it and comment on it if they wish but usually you don't get into the debate of changing wording.

Differentiated Evaluation

Principals make a distinction as to the type of evaluation they will carry out for new teachers and for experienced teachers.

> I have two types of evaluation in my school. I spend 15-20 hours with every one of my teachers to look at math. But I can't do that for new teachers. For new teachers, I have a policy that says that I've got to make a decision at the end of the year as to whether or not they are going to stay and that's summative evaluation like you have never seen in your life before.

Beginning teachers, because of policy, live through a more summative evaluation. One principal recognizes their needs and "sets them up for success" by transforming the summative evaluation into a cross between summative and formative evaluation. This is mainly accomplished by narrowing the scope of expected behaviors in order that the new teacher can avoid feeling overwhelmed.

> Cards are laid on the table particularly with beginning teachers. I go in and I say: "Here are the things I'm going to look at. I'm not going to look at your kids today. I'm not going to look at your displays. Here are the things I'm going to look at." So I set them up and let them know what I want to see for the first six months. Show me they can manage a classroom. Show me the things I am looking for. Do it. So I sort of set them up for success.

In Marigold school, there is focused formative evaluation for the entire staff. Each year, the principal identifies a focus of instruction and evaluation for the entire school. One teacher describes the process:

> He chooses one thing every year. This year it is math. It's really the first time that he has tried to evaluate something this big. He doesn't want to see just the lesson plan but also the yearly plan. He prepared a questionnaire with questions like "Do you know the program of studies?" Yes/no. "I have objects that students can manipulate?" Yes/no. It's a four-page questionnaire. You go through that with your colleagues who are teaching at the same level as you. He then called a meeting where everyone discussed what they understood and what they liked in the questionnaire. We were asked if we considered that the items would be useful for evaluation. Are there things missing? Did you find it easy to answer and did we want to improve it? He will evaluate us according to this questionnaire.

The Emotional Impact of Evaluation

Evaluation is an emotional experience for principals for different reasons. On the one hand, they have to deal with teacher stress in relation to the evaluation experience. On the other hand, they have to deal with their own stress—that of being evaluated by their teachers, by their colleagues, and by central administration staff. Conflict and tension may arise from the different roles they are asked to play.

Dealing with Teacher Stress

The principals realize that teachers find evaluation stressful and threatening. Some believe that the stress leads to a better performance. Another explains it as being linked to the fear of failing, of being a disappointment. They did not comment extensively on the ways of reducing the stress except to indicate that common experience is a useful tool, as are positive and encouraging comments.

> It is very threatening for them because they have to expose themselves. They have to talk to me in the role of the evaluator. There is nothing casual about it. Even for teachers with permanent contracts it can be quite traumatic. One teacher has been here longer than I have, and every third and sixth year comes up and she has the jitters.
>
> I guess I have to say frankly that there is a bit of extra stress and in a lot of cases I have seen superior performances because of the stress.
>
> I don't think they want to be a failure to me because I've beem so supportive of them. They know I perceive them as being just excellent teachers and it bothers them that I might be disappointed in them.

Principals attempt to give negative comments in a non-threatening way. At times, growth comments are used to indicate the areas that need improvement. These are usually stated in terms of "consider these." The importance of positive comments is recognized.

> I usually figure there should be 10 positive comments for every negative one. There are usually no more than two or three areas to consider.

However, even one negative comment is often difficult for teachers to accept. One principal describes how a teacher reacted to a growth statement he had put in the evaluation report.

> I wrote a glowing report about one teacher and included one growth statement. For weeks he bugged me about that. He could not focus on anything but that one statement, which was perceived as negative. He wanted to talk about and talk about and talk about it.

Evaluators Being Evaluated

The evaluator is often the one being evaluated. Not only must principals prove that they are credible to their teachers and that they have the necessary interpersonal skills to establish good relationships with them, they must also be credible in the eyes of their colleagues and central administration staff. In the words of the superintendent:

> The evaluator is taking a tremendous risk in making a judgment about another individual. They not only need time to make sure their judgment is relatively objective but they also have to be sure that they have credibility. If they're going to talk about lesson planning, presentation, or reinforcement they really need to know what they are talking about. They can't bluff their way through that process. It takes a tremendous amount of time and that really establishes the credibility of it.

The principal's written report about a teacher is often subject to scrutiny by other principals who are looking to hire that individual or by central administration staff who may have questions concerning the individual. As the superintendent indicates, the report filed by the principal is often evaluated and judgments are made about the principal.

> Principals put reports forward and those reports find their way to the file. Sometimes, we in central office come across a difficult situation and we have to look at the reports or we may have a question about a teacher and I'll ask for the file. Now, you look at the report and you start to say: "Has this principal been objective?" or "Has this principal been too affirming and missing the point in terms of development?" or "Has this principal been too terse and unkind in the evaluation?" So you start to evaluate the principals. When you get to teacher transfers, other principals have access to teacher files. They look at the letters of evaluation but they have also heard through the rumor mill what the teacher is like. So they form an opinion and they look at the report and they find out that it is disconfirming. It doesn't take long in a system like this to know that there are some principals' reports that you cannot count on.

The principal is in a very difficult position and can often feel conflict and tension.

Conflict

As rewarding as it may be, evaluation is not an easy task. Principals may well be those who can best do the job, but it is not without conflict. How can I be part of the team, yet be a judge of people's performance? How can I help people grow as teachers if they see me first and foremost as their judge? These questions go far beyond a job, a process, a role. People, relationships, and feelings are what is involved.

> Evaluation is to bring about change and therein lies the conflict in the role of the principal. How can you be judgmental and still expect that person to change? You get in this trap.... Where do you draw the line? Because ultimately when the administrator does the evaluation, regardless of what kind of terms you want to use, it ends up being summative. Everything that the principal does is evaluative. I walk down the hallway and hear a loud voice in the classroom, and that is going to have an impression on my perspective of that teacher, and that makes me give some suggestions to that individual about his or her conduct in the classroom. You can't avoid it.

> For the longest time, principals fought it with a passion. We are part of the team. If we start evaluating we are setting ourselves aside from that team and we don't want to do that. It alienates the trust that we have gained with our teachers.

The principals still feel, however, that they are the best people to do the job.

> I know what they are doing. If somebody else comes in, what do they know? I feel very comfortable with it.

> I feel comfortable with my ability to evaluate and give some guidance.

Relationships

For the principals interviewed, evaluation is not only about measuring performance and judging quality. It is about feeling proud, and being committed to the people they work with and to the profession. It is about the principal recognizing the teacher's feelings and the teacher recognizing the principal's commitment. Evaluation is about people relating, communicating, and trusting one another or not.

> I tell my staff, I'm the best person in the world to evaluate you. I know everything about you. I know your child was sick last night and you didn't get any sleep and you are here by the grace of God and you are not going to do a very good job. I can see that and I'm walking out of here right now. Or you've got the trust in me to say: "Don't come and see me because it's a mess."

> I want teachers to know that I have the highest respect for them and what they do. And if they stay on my staff more than one year that means I have made a commitment to them and their future.

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> Teachers want to know how they are perceived by me. They want to have confirmation that, yes, they are doing OK.
>
> Teachers are professionals and I trust them.

The evaluation process may or may not change the relationship. It may, as one teacher defined it, be a moment of dialogue, an occasion to share. This aspect of evaluation exists and it is probably the lifeblood of what would otherwise be a pen-and-paper process. Evaluation is not merely the application of criteria to a performance. It is also about feelings, about sharing, about trust, about relationships, or the lack of all of these. One of the principals shared some comments that he had received from teachers following a formal evaluation:

> I thank X for being so thorough in his evaluation. I also thank him for his support and for taking the time to inquire ever so often on how things are going.
>
> Undoubtedly an evaluation of such magnitude can be unnerving. However, once it was over, I was very pleased with both your reactions and my own. I am pleased that you acknowledged me and my accomplishments in so many areas. And I am even more pleased that I did not disappoint myself in the preparation for this lesson. Thank you for taking the time and the energy to put all of us through this evaluation because in the end it achieves what you were looking for, accountability and competence.

Bringing About Change and Learning

Principals believe that teachers generally want to learn and become better. They recognize, however, the difficulties that exist in bringing about change. One principal talks about the difficulties he has in getting teachers to talk about their teaching without self-criticism. He shares his frustrations in trying to get a teacher to change and wonders whether summative evaluation is an effective mechanism for bringing about change.

> At times, I have indicated to teachers in informal visits that changes were needed. But the behavior doesn't change entirely, and then when it comes to summative evaluation the teacher comes back and says, "But you told me I was progressing nicely." So as a mechanism to really affect change in teachers, it isn't always successful unless it gets to the point of being almost a threat to their continued employment. Then, is the change really genuine?
>
> I can't say I have been really successful in changing the individual.
>
> There is a fine line between evaluation and harassing. I mean, you can go and visit, you can comment, you can talk and you can come back to visit again.
>
> Sure we encourage self-analysis in teachers, but in most cases you ask a teacher how it went and the first thing they do is to go into self-criticism. This didn't work and that.

These principals see evaluation and professional development as being intertwined. One of the principals indicates that one of the things he looks for when evaluating teachers is their involvement in professional development within the school, within the district and outside the district. He views a good teacher as one who is proactive in professional development in whatever they are interested in.

> I sit, at the beginning of the year, with each teacher. We go through objectives for the year, and I ask them to specify what kind of professional development things they are looking for so that I can help direct them.

Principals attempt to share recent information about teaching with their staff, for example, information on effective teaching, on process writing, and on classroom management in the hope of bringing about change and learning. The principals' leadership is one of structuring the learning experience and having teachers makes a conscious effort to familiarize themselves with the new information. The principal ensures the follow-through by insisting that teacher behavior reflect the information covered. This then becomes the focus for formative evaluation.

> All my teachers, if they have been here 10 years, they have got a file this thick of things we have done. If my thrust one year was process writing and we did inservices and the whole works, when I went to see them that year, I wanted them to show me in their teaching that they were internalizing process writing. I wanted to see it, I wanted to see how they taught it. I wanted to see the principles that we had agreed on.

The effects of presenting new information are not always immediate, as indicates one principal. Teachers need time to internalize the information in their own way.

> I remember one year I did a series on center development. I didn't think anything much happened. And a year later, I wanted to see what had been the implications of all the information I had presented. Teachers had bought into it in various degrees. Their programs had changed and their style of delivery was modified. We did a lot in cooperative learning a couple of years ago. And I went to see and of course they could show me "Hey I can do it," but not all had really internalized. Now they are all doing it in some format that they are comfortable with.

The principals recognize that they are limited in their ability to provide formative kind of activities for teachers. As one principal states, "We don't spend enough time talking about teaching."

> The difficulty comes within schools. What mechanisms do you have where there is a situation where you need to direct the teachers to some formative kind of activities? We don't have a lot of options. We can sit as principals and talk to the teachers, we can advise. They can visit another classroom. I can refer them to reading.

The important factor in bringing about change appears to be the teacher's desire to buy into the process. As one principal indicates, teachers must also be convinced that they are learners. What seems to work is not so much the amount of information received, access to the information, or even the pressure of combining professional development with the evaluation process, but more the atmosphere and the structure of the professional development program.

Reflections

The researchers have sought as part of the qualitative research process to reflect on the themes presented in the two previous sections so as to bring a higher order of synthesis and understanding to the findings. In the words of Anzul and Ely (1988), we are "reflecting upon the reflections." We highlight four overarching metathemes that have emerged from the data and that seem to us to have significance. The themes we highlight are:

1. Giving teachers ownership in the process will contribute to a positive evaluation experience.
2. Evaluators need to understand the culture of the classroom.
3. Building trust relationships contributes to a positive evaluation experience.
4. Teacher growth and change is enhanced in a collegial, collaborative context.

Theme 1: Giving teachers ownership in the process will contribute to a positive evaluation experience

A powerful and overarching theme that comes from the teachers' stories and comments is the need to have ownership in the process of evaluation. Ownership in the evaluation process means knowing what to expect, having some control over what is going to happen, and the freedom to express concerns, wishes and desires. When describing good or bad evaluation experiences, teacher comments revolve around the issues of power, control, and freedom. If knowledge is power, it is also security. It is the difference between being a participant and having evaluation "done to me."

Teachers' stories and comments about negative evaluation experiences present many commonalities. The evaluation session is viewed as being apart from the teaching process. The evaluation is surrounded by "pomp and circumstance" as one teacher says. It is not part of everday life. Teachers often have little control over the process or the outcome. They do not know what to expect and feel confused. Visits are perceived as being short, and the evaluator is not seen as being credible, either because the teachers know little about them or because they do not seem to have the competence to evaluate a particular subject matter. There is often little feedback. Comments are often perceived as being negative and superficial. Even positive comments are viewed with suspicion when the evaluator is not seen as being credible or when there is no follow-through. The teachers are mainly passive and feel threatened by the whole procedure.

Positive evaluation experiences contrast markedly with negative evaluation experiences. Teachers participate in the process. They choose the time and place of their evaluation. They participate in the preparation of the evaluation criteria. Ample time is given to prepare the evaluation session with the evaluator. Teachers know what to expect, what they will be evaluated on, and what is expected of them. There is a postconference between the principal and the teacher in which a discussion of the lesson takes place. The teacher carries the responsibility of asking where and how they can improve. The process is viewed as being democratic and fair. Teachers believe that this process sets them up for success and fosters confidence and self-evaluation. Evaluation is experienced as a continuous and ongoing process, as part of other activities.

It is important to note that where teachers feel they are part of the process, there is no excuse for failure. When a teacher is not informed, it is relatively easy to explain away a bad evaluation with the excuse that he or she did not know. It is also easier to find that an evaluation is lacking in depth or in validity. When a teacher is well informed, it is not only more difficult to fail, it is more difficult to explain that failure as being someone else's fault. When one is informed, one becomes more responsible. In our view, information is not merely a source of control and power, a means to ensure a feeling of ownership of the process by the teacher, it is also an invitation to that teacher to develop a deeper sense of responsibility toward his or her evaluation.

In our opinion, it is important that teachers participate in their own evaluation and that they be empowered to take important decisions concerning the process. Teachers at Marigold school were positive about the school's focus on mathematics for evaluation purposes for the year. Teachers had the chance to discuss the objectives of their math program in a group situation and also as individuals on a one-on-one basis with the principal. Accountability and competence cannot occur when teachers do not have a sense of ownership in the process or when they are not empowered to share in the responsibility of evaluating their performance.

From the data gathered, it would appear that opportunities were missed on the part of both the evaluator and the teachers to move toward greater involvement of the teachers in the process. Principals were aware that teachers needed to know and they answered that need in various ways (e.g., handouts, preconferences).

However, when one compares the information given to the teachers with the questions they ask and the messages they send, one wonders if communication is really as good as principals may believe. Teachers are swamped with concerns and papers. Do they really read that hand-out, and do they internalize it? If they have not had the chance to help prepare it or discuss it, how much ownership do they feel toward it? Although the preconference was a means of dialogue between the principal and the teacher, teachers were often reluctant to identify areas of concern they had about their own teaching. If teachers were to specify concerns and areas for observation, this might lead to greater discovery and growth.

The teachers described evaluation as a mirror that is held up at a precise time, and in which teachers view their teaching. However, they do not hold the mirror. They do not decide the criteria that will be used to evaluate their teaching, nor do they decide what is to be evaluated. Evaluation seems to done by verifying whether a behavior is present. The expected teacher behaviors are set out in the district policy, and these include to a large extent management, delivery, preparation, and organizational skills. It would appear important for evaluators to consider staff input in the preparation of criteria and the kinds of behavior to be observed and evaluated. We believe that this could further a sense of ownership and empowerment on the part of the teachers. Teachers with positive evaluation experiences speak of this as being important.

Theme 2: Evaluators need to understand the culture of the classroom

Words such as *visitor,* and *stranger,* were often used by the teachers to describe their feelings relative to an evaluator observing their classes. The evaluator, no matter how well known or appreciated, is seen as the invited guest in the teacher's world. And as in everyday life one prepares to receive visitors, so do teachers. Is this preparation a way of ensuring that the visitor appreciates the specific culture of the classroom much as we prepare our homes for visitors so that they may see it at its best? By making the classroom and the lesson as attractive as possible, are teachers ensuring that the visitor likes what he or she sees and understands its true value? Do teachers prepare so extensively in order to feel that they have an active part in their evaluation and so that they maintain a certain measure of control over their own evaluation? Teachers feel that it is important that the principal (the evaluator) understand and appreciate the culture of their classroom. This can only be accomplished if the principal takes the time to understand the context of the classroom. Frequent visits allow the evaluator to become "one of the family," to participate more fully in the culture of the classroom. Short visits can deepen the sense of alienation and of being invaded felt by the teachers. How can you know my world after a 20-minute visit when I have spent this much time creating it? And if you don't know my world, how can you pass judgment on it and on me? Teachers are most sensitive to any actions by the evaluator that they interpret as being a lack of appreciation of their classroom. When evaluators leave in the middle of the lesson or do not stay very long, this may mean that the evaluator does not appreciate the complexity and the wealth of the classroom culture, what the teacher considers as "my world."

Lack of feedback can also be seen as a lack of respect for the teacher's world. Resentment often occurs when the visitor invades a private world and does not acknowledge or contribute to that world in the form of suggestions and comments. Although drop-in visits may be important to principals in order to familiarize themselves with the life of the classroom, one cannot help but wonder if the teachers really understand why they are dropping in. If no comments are made during these visits, one might wonder if teachers are completely comfortable with these small visits. Teachers like as immediate feedback as possible after a classroom visit. The postconference meeting with the teacher the same day is seen as positive. It indicates clearly that the evaluator respects and appreciates that this world is important to the teacher. By reacting the same day, the evaluator is saying that the teacher's world is also important to the evaluator.

Positive comments are proof that the teacher's world is appreciated. Evaluators indicate that they have noticed the extra work. Positive comments may well say "I am a visitor in your world and I find this world attractive, interesting, and worthwhile." Positive comments about the teacher's participation in the school is an invitation for the teacher to belong to a bigger world, that of the school. It helps the teacher see beyond the isolation of their own "class world."

The French immersion situation presents added challenges for the unilingual administrator who tries to understand the culture of the classroom. The principal in this situation becomes more of a stranger by not being able to understand the language of communication used by the students and the teacher. It becomes difficult for principals to assume the role of curriculum leader in this situation, although they may well be able to act as leaders for teachers in many other areas.

In understanding any culture, there is a need to understand the explicit and implicit values and beliefs that guide behavior. In the school context, there is often little occasion for the evaluators, the policy makers, and the teachers to share their perceptions and assumptions about what it means to be a teacher and what constitutes good teaching. As well, there is little sharing about the purposes of teacher evaluation. Studies (see Chapter 2) have indicated that difficulties often exist in implementing evaluation policies because the participants have different assumptions about the nature of teaching and teacher evaluation. It is important that these assumptions be discussed if evaluation is to have a meaningful effect in recognizing and rewarding teacher performance, in enhancing teacher growth, and in being accountable to the school district and to the public. Both evaluators and teachers would profit from a profound and sincere sharing of views in this matter. This sharing of values and beliefs may be an important first step prior to the evaluator stepping into the classroom.

Theme 3: Building trust relationships contributes to a positive evaluation experience

Evaluation is not mainly a pencil-and-paper thing. It is a process wherein people need to know each other as persons. The teacher needs to know the evaluator in order to feel that the evaluator's judgment is fair. The evaluator must be seen to be credible, human, and someone with whom the teacher has established a relationship. You do not invite a stranger, or even someone that you know but that you dislike, into your world, nor do you want that person to be there uninvited. The evaluator must also know the teacher as a person. This knowledge will help him or her understand the complexities of the teacher's class culture, the "why I do what I do with these children." It also helps the evaluator to know the children. The evaluator can then catch a glimpse of the human relationships at work in this particular classroom. Teaching is not only "here is what I do" but, rather, "here is what I do because of who I am and because of who these children are."

Teachers want to know what the principal thinks of them. But principals also want to be thought well of. They can also feel isolated and need to share the emotion generated by the evaluation experience. They need a confirmation of their performance. Principals want their staff to know that they respect them and are aware of the work they do. Principals feel they know their staff members and hope that this will translate into trust, mutual respect, and acceptance.

Communication is the key to building strong trusting relationships on which the process of evaluation can be successful. Although teachers generally feel that administrators deal with them fairly, one wonders to what extent principals and teachers are really hearing each other? Do teachers really make their feelings clear? How well do they communicate their needs before an evaluation? The principal is, after all, in a position of power: The principal is the evaluator. Will teachers feel free to really state what is on their minds? When linked to the desire to be seen as professionals, the fear of failure, and the desire to do their best, how much are teachers really communicating to principals about their needs, their concerns, and their world? On the other hand, how aware are teachers of the enormous amount of work done by principals to communicate, to become credible, and to be good evaluators? Some realize the work that is put in but it is often those who have shared in that work.

In our opinion, the building of trust relationships is the foundation of a positive evaluation process. The important questions that arise are the following: What are the structures that contribute to the building of trust relationships? What leadership style contributes to the building of trust relationships? How can teachers assume more control over their professional development so that they may become more equal partners in the process?

Theme 4: Teacher growth and change is enhanced in a collegial, collaborative context

Teachers were quick to point out that they were more apt to experience change and growth in a professional development context than in a formal evaluation context. The sharing of ideas with other colleagues, on a one-on-one basis or in a workshop format, was seen to be more fruitful and more pertinent to their needs in the classroom. Growth was experienced when teachers could work with other teachers. Formal evaluation was seen as being important, as being a confirmation of one's teaching; however, few felt that it contributed substantially to their professional growth.

Present evaluation practices in the school culture do not honor teacher culture. Having made this statement, we do not feel that this reflects negatively on the people or on the practices in place in the County of Wildflowers. Rather, the issue is a much larger one. It is the issue of seeing teachers in a new dimension. It involves raising the status of teachers, of making them better at their craft and involving them in setting policy. In recognizing that teachers need more autonomy and recognition, we are empowering them and treating them as professionals.

Teachers want to be accountable for the work they do. They want to be responsible for their actions and for their growth. Present evaluation practices and procedures often do not differentiate between evaluation for improvement and evaluation for the possible termination of employment. Many teachers consider the evaluation process to be irrelevant to their needs or perhaps even to be punitive to those who are competent teachers. It is something to be "gotten over with" every three years. Evaluation is viewed as being separate from their everyday life in the classroom.

Although most teachers want to grow professionally, many find it very difficult to reflect on their teaching and to assess their practices. Most teachers find it difficult to accept negative comments made by the principal in a formal evaluation visit. Why are negative comments so difficult to accept? Should teachers reconsider their reactions to negative or growth comments? How can you grow without first accepting that there is room for improvement? Are negative comments difficult to accept because they are given by an evaluator who is in a position of power? Perhaps they are difficult to accept because they make teachers feel powerless. It is our belief that giving teachers more ownership in the process will contribute to feelings of involvement and responsibility. This empowerment of teachers can only improve the quality of teacher evaluation.

It seems that the principal's leadership is an important factor in determining teacher attitudes toward evaluation and professional growth. Principals must often assume the role of catalyst and motivator. They must be supportive of and involved in collaborative activities for their staff. In creating a context where teachers can contribute to the development of shared working knowledge, to goal setting, and to the setting of standards, evaluation will not be viewed by teachers as being separate from their daily work lives. Teachers need a structure that will motivate them to try new ways of doing things. In this study, professional development was not left entirely to the individual teacher; rather, a context was created where teacher evaluation was integrally linked with staff development and goal setting in the school. This was seen by the teachers as a positive and rewarding experience.

In summary, we can say that we have tried to understand how teachers and evaluators feel, what they do, and what they believe. We have been tremendously enriched by the experience, and we are grateful to them for the trust they have placed in us by sharing their experiences. The experience was personally rewarding for the researchers. We hope that the results will help teachers and evaluators better understand each other's world. It is our firm hope that this study will be used as a *trait d'union* linking the two realities and as a means of better understanding the impact of evaluation practices on teachers and on teaching.

Reference

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Chapter 10

A Case Study of All Saints Catholic School District

The Superintendent of All Saints Catholic Schools was pleased that the school district had been identified as a potential case study site. In our initial discussion, we spent some time clarifying the purpose of the case study. We stressed that while we were interested in knowing what the district's teacher evaluation policy was and how it worked in practice, we were equally interested in those schools where evaluation was not an add-on but rather had become part of the professional activities in the school. We were interested in talking to principals who had shown leadership in encouraging teacher growth and asked that three schools, one elementary, one junior high, and one high school, be identified as potential sites. The Superintendent showed a ready interest in the study and agreed to discuss it with his associates and be in touch again. We followed up this informal discussion with a letter that reiterated our interest in practices related to instructional improvement and outlined the potential linkages with student achievement and school culture.

Acting on behalf of the Superintendent, one of his associates conveyed approval and identified the three specific district school sites involved in the study. He also asked that the members of the senior administration be interviewed because the district was in the process of revising its policy. The principals of the three schools were contacted, and all were pleased their schools had been identified as sites. The district's administration has actively tried to ensure that all activities in the district are based on the policy that reflects its religious foundation. Teaching is considered to be essential to the fulfillment of this mission, and the district policy defines evaluation as "The systematic process of assessing the effectiveness and adequacy of performance according to definite criteria and purposes."

Because it is a large district, the supervision of school affairs is shared among a number of assistant superintendents. They meet monthly with the principals of their designated schools. At the same time, the central office is one where there is much cooperation and discussion so that it retains a level of informality. The Superintendent spoke of the district's decision to foster a learning culture.

> There are three things that I think you have to look at in terms of a learning organization: the corporate culture must set a direction for the organization ... If as a school system we do not have a common vision, we end up with a series of isolated buildings called schools; but the concept of the one big monolithical way that everything is done this way or that way is false. I think that within a district you must have directionality with diversity or directionality with flexibility so each school within that vision must have the opportunity to develop its own culture within the general culture and I think that most have increasing flexibility to develop in different ways. I think, similarly, each individual has a role to play in the overall vision and direction of a district, a role to play in the vision and direction of the school, but also a personal vision and commitment. We are all part of a team.

Impact of the Teacher Evaluation Policy

Senior administrators found it difficult to pinpoint the impact of the policy, because in the past few years the district had undertaken several related initiatives, any one of which could help explain changes in pedagogy and increases in student achievement. As one commented:

> I see a far greater focus in our schools on the whole issue of teaching and on pedagogy and instruction, which I think is positive. I also see more classroom doors open and more collaboration between teachers in terms of working with their peers to improve their teaching, and I think that that is a very positive move.

The many initiatives the district had undertaken to further its vision of a learning organization stressed the strong relationship the administration saw between professional development and student achievement. "Our key resource in this organization is the human resource, and the development of human talent is a clear strategic value to us." The senior staff enumerated some of these initiatives: principals are requesting more funds for professional development in their schools; there is a professional development fund for principal development; there is some money for sabbaticals; there are workshops not only for teachers, but also for secretaries; there are programs for custodians; and "there is a leadership training program in this school district where we are encouraging people who are interested in going into administrative positions to get their feet wet and decide this is what they are interested in. We are using existing principals as trainers so, in a sense, we are all becoming teachers of teachers or teachers of adults and that's increasingly seen as a powerful role."

The Superintendent described the link he saw between the development of a learning culture and teacher evaluation. For him, it was a way of helping teachers identify where they could continue to grow: "I think that's strongly embedded in the self-understanding process that they go through as a teacher—understanding how they are performing—and I think getting information from an outsider helps that a great deal." At the same time, he "strongly objected to the belief that we can fundamentally improve education by putting in new rules, new regulations, and new controls. I think," he continued, "you will get far better results by providing initiative and incentives and an image and environment where people are encouraged to learn."

The Teacher Evaluation Policy

Prior to the initiation of the policy, the district evaluated teachers in their first probationary year, and then again in their second year for a permanent certificate. Only where teachers were identified as having problems were any further evaluations carried out. Partially as an outcome of its Strategic Plan (1981) and then in response to the policy requirement from Alberta Education (1984), the district developed a specific district policy on teacher evaluation. A committee representing teachers, principals, school district administrators, and parents heard representations from a number of groups before developing the policy, which was subsequently reviewed in 1986 and 1987.

Several questions were debated and had to be reconciled: Should a form of merit coding be used, or should a written description of the situation be sufficient? If the intent was to identify and remove incompetent teachers, was this the most effective procedure? Did the costs in terms of time outweigh any benefits that might accrue? How could protection for the teacher in terms of employment be balanced with the rights of children to a quality education? There was more discussion around this policy than any other in the district, and in an effort to ensure that all perspectives were included a policy requiring both description and coding evolved. On the two-page evaluation form, four general areas, teaching procedures, classroom management, communications and interpersonal skills, and professional responsibilities, are identified. Under each one is a list of more specific criteria such as "Maintains classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning and exemplifies Christian values." A small box for comments follows each general area and a four-part merit rating scale from Excellent (outstanding), Very Good (strengths in specific areas), Satisfactory (qualities and characteristics expected) to Unsatisfactory (weaknesses and deficiencies).

Several changes have been made to the initial policy, which required that teachers be evaluated once every three years; this was changed to once every five years because of the amount of work required in completing teacher evaluations and the lack of sufficient administrative time to complete them. Similarly, the procedures for appeals to the policy are being streamlined to reduce the amount of time involved in the process. The use of the four merit categories had also come under discussion. The senior administrators felt that despite well-documented positive evaluations, teachers and administrators too often disagreed on the merit coding. Such situations took away from the positive impact of the evaluation process. They were also aware that such coding was inconsistent across schools and had developed comparison lists. Another issue was the appropriateness of evaluating beginning teachers and experienced teachers on the same scale. They thought some of these problems were due to the changing emphasis of evaluation and a need to follow up on the original training for administrators.

Training for Principals

Following the initial implementation of the policy in 1985, the district had provided workshops to prepare principals for systematic classroom observation and analysis. The initial evaluation design was based on the teacher effectiveness literature. Over the years the focus of the merit criteria has changed, but there have been no district-mandated workshops to update principals. Instead, such initiatives are in the hands of the principals' professional development committee who have had at least one session on teacher evaluation for colleague principals.

Although they have confidence in their principals, senior administrators were aware of a number of potential problem areas. One concern that ultimately could have legal ramifications was principals' lack of attention to specifics:

> The majority of our principals have been successful teachers, and in our experience they intuitively know what is "good" teaching but they are not always able to explain why it's good and that is not adequate any more. You have to be able to explain why you think it is "good." I think we have got much work to do in that regard.

Another frustration was with those principals who did not adequately prepare to do evaluations and so had to rush to complete them by the end of the year.

> It takes time to discuss the document at the beginning of the year, to discuss what evaluation is, to discuss my expectations as the evaluator, and then to give teachers a chance to discuss or to build a dialogue about what they want to see as a result of the evaluation so that it is two-way in many ways. With good teachers I would say that it would take at least three or four visits minimum and not over a period of one month, but ideally once a month. It pays off because they become your master teachers and their teaching can affect their colleagues, so I believe that it is really worthwhile.

One area where central office administrators wished to see further improvement was in the writing of the reports. Senior staff planned to talk to principals about providing more definitive statements in their reports with clearly described actions which supported each statement. They thought that this would remove some of the ambiguity found in reports.

Positive Outcomes

Positive outcomes to the policy identified by senior staff included a greater focus on teaching in general, to counterbalance a predominant emphasis on content matter; an emphasis on the structure of teaching in particular; and the identification of a language to talk about teaching. One senior administrator thought that a positive outcome of the policy was that ineffective teachers left the district more often than formerly. Another noted the very positive evaluations he had read including the comments of the teachers about the process being "growth producing." For all the senior administrators, the impact of a positive evaluation was as much psychological as practical. Although they could not remember many specific instances where teachers had changed their pedagogy as a result of an evaluation, they firmly believed in the importance of feedback to teachers. Reflecting on the benefit of teacher evaluation, one concluded that what made the difference was where teachers had a sense of ownership about the process. Another noted that where evaluations had been systematically and carefully done, they conveyed to teachers not only how important teaching was, but also documented the many ways their teaching was valued. One assistant superintendent acknowledged that teachers who formerly may have been identified informally as "having difficulty" and who were moved from school to school without any official explanation for their frequent moves now had to receive an evaluation and so were now treated fairly, as were the children they taught. This administrator also pointed out that potentially trying situations for a teacher can be easily overcome when in response to a parental complaint the principal or senior administrator can refer to an excellent evaluation.

Involvement of Assistant Superintendents

Assistant superintendents were involved in the process of teacher evaluation in three ways: First, they met with each principal and in a discussion of their staff identified those teachers who must be evaluated. Second, in their discussions with principals over the course of the year they monitored the success of first-year teachers in particular. Evaluations of first year teachers had to be completed by late January so that decisions concerning staffing could begin for the following school year. Finally, they provided advice and assistance to the principal who was working with a teacher under review, listened to the concerns of teachers both from those who wanted to launch a formal appeal and those who just wanted to express their point of view, and became directly involved in cases of teacher dismissal. One senior administrator spoke of the morality of such decisions. "You have to struggle to make sure that you are doing the right thing and at the same time you can't be overly sensitive to the teacher because we do know clearly that some children are suffering because of some teachers." When the evaluation forms were submitted to central office, they read them over and initialed them before they went into the teachers' files.

One further change in the district that the assistant superintendents thought would have an impact on teacher evaluation was a change in emphasis from district defined goals to school growth plans. This was part of the visioning process at the school level where principal and staff together decided on objectives for the following three or four years. Senior staff expected that within the plan professional development would receive major emphasis. One described school-based professional development situations he had seen already in a number of schools where teachers held mini-inservices for themselves, where cooperative planning across a grade level was the norm, where teachers were resource facilitators for one another, and where teachers visited each other's classes so frequently that anyone was welcome in the room. The senior administrators expected that the district's emphasis on a learning culture throughout the district would encourage more of these initiatives.

The Three School Sites

The three schools chosen as case sites were St. Clare Elementary School, St. Ambrose Junior High School, and St. Lawrence High School. The principal of each of the chosen schools was contacted to further explain the focus of the case study and to identify appropriate times for the school visits. Early spring when they would be completing their own teacher evaluations was chosen. All three principals were willing to be involved and to share their experiences regarding teacher evaluation. Procedures for identifying school staff who might be willing to be interviewed were discussed, and we expressed our willingness to speak to school staff about the study and any concerns they might have if they so wished. A letter outlining the specifics of the case was sent to each principal. The principals used a combination of a general letter to staff inviting them to participate and asking staff who were in the process or had been recently evaluated to share their experiences. Principals had arranged for the interviews to be held during school hours, and in each school approximately one third of the teaching staff was interviewed over a week. Administrators were interviewed about two weeks later, allowing some time for the identification of issues from the first round of interviews. All participants were asked for permission to audiotape the interview, and this was given in all but two instances where teachers preferred that the interviewer take notes of their conversation.

Prior to beginning the teachers' interviews the researchers discussed possible questions and outlined a common set of topics (Appendix A). Following the interviews at each school, the team met to share experiences and identify topics that might be pursued for clarification in subsequent interviews. Following the transcription of the teachers' interviews, we identified the areas for discussion with each principal. A copy of the final draft of each school case was returned to the principal for verification and reactions.

St. Clare Elementary School

St. Clare Elementary School houses about 350 children in grades from kindergarten to grade 6. It is located on the crest of a small hill overlooking a relatively new housing subdivision.

On entering the school one cannot help but be impressed by the scene that is revealed. Immediately inside the main doors of the school is a bright, open, and spacious area surrounded by the main office and gymnasium on the left, a multipurpose room directly ahead, and a sunken open-area library and classrooms to the right. A large pyramidal skylight in the center of this area allows natural light to flow over the carefully decorated pale blue walls and to reflect off of the highly polished floor.

A range of soft toys are suspended on a variety of trapezes from the ceiling. A large teepee stands in the middle of the open library, creating semiprivate work areas for different groups of students and symbolizing the richness of the traditions of Canada's Native peoples.

Around the walls of this area, small work stations comprising pairs of desks have been set up with their own box of crayons and paper and either a book or an activity where students can explore together a variety of topics ranging from animals of the world, to number patterns, to the story of the human body, and the history of Canada.

On the walls themselves and in a variety of different display cases, numerous posters, books, and symbols convey messages about the importance of each individual child. One such rainbow, stretching over the windows of the main reception area and leading the way to the staff-room has displayed beneath it the words:

> Child, give me your hand
> That I may walk in the light
> Of your faith in me.
> (Hannah Kahn)

The entire area has a warm, friendly, and safe feeling about it. The visitor to the school immediately gets the impression that it is a school where students are encouraged to play and learn together, where staff are interested in their students, not only academically, but also spiritually, emotionally, and physically. The environment expresses a concern for the welfare and development of the whole child, and acknowledges that this concern does not just exist within the classroom but also outside the classroom.

The staff room was located beyond the reception area at the end of a short corridor. Different groups of staff sat at the various tables and on the sofa discussing animatedly a variety of topics ranging from the previous evenings activities, to the difficulties that they were experiencing in arranging a suitable time for a multiple class excursion. Above the sofa on the far wall was a large multicolored rainbow emerging from a large cloud with the word WELCOME boldly printed on it. Beneath the rainbow, in their own smaller clouds, were the names of each of the school's staff members—a further sign that all members of the school community, staff and students, are appreciated and valued in this school.

The walls of the staff room displayed a range of notices: brochures for special professional development workshops to be run by the school district, opportunities for further study at various universities, and acknowledgements of special achievements by various members of staff. Most prominently, however, were three large calendars, one for the year, one for the month, and one for the week, which outlined future events of interest for the staff. These were used by the staff and school administration to coordinate planning of school activities. It was of interest, however, that they also contained reminders of the dates of staff members' birthdays and other dates of special interest. This seemed to reinforce our impression that staff of this school were highly valued as individuals and not just as teachers. Their personal celebrations and achievements seemed to be just as important to the school community as were their professional accomplishments.

Staff members warmly welcomed us into their groups and expressed genuine interest in their interviews. They were clearly interested in talking about teacher evaluation, curious about the sorts of questions that we wanted to ask, and eager to be involved. Staff spoke freely about the school, its history, and what it was that they were trying to do as a staff in this particular school.

According to the staff, both the current and previous administrations appear to have focused their efforts on developing a strong and collaborative school culture—a community—in which all individuals staff, students, and parents are honored and valued.

Efforts had been made by the staff as a whole to develop a school creed—a "We believe" statement—that outlined their beliefs, values, and purposes and those of the school district to which they belonged. Among others, this creed was based on the values of respect for the dignity and self-worth of all individuals; of sharing with and caring for one another; and on the value of

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freedom for individuals to grow and to develop in order to reach their potential.

Further, in relation to teacher evaluation, the current principal stated:

> I look at evaluation on the basis of certain assumptions. One of the primary assumptions is that it is there for growth—growth for the individual as a person, as a colleague, and of course to improve instructional practices.

Mr. McKay has been a principal for about 12 years and had developed his own philosophy concerning evaluation. Appointed to this school mid-year, he had yet to introduce his ideas to the staff in detail but felt that his philosophy was similar to that of the previous principals. He believed that teachers should be fully aware of the process prior to evaluation, that there should be about seven classroom visits of approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and that for each visit there should be a preconference and postconference. The preconference for experienced teachers was a brief episode of two to three minutes just to confirm the appointment, the topic of the class, and the focus of the evaluation visit. The postconference was the area where Mr. McKay felt he had made most strides. He encouraged teachers to talk about their lesson.

> There are teachers who will not want to talk about it; they find it difficult to do and that's one of the things we have to encourage. We cannot have only extrinsic evaluations. Teachers, ultimately, must learn to self-evaluate on a daily basis. That's how they improve their instructional practices. Getting them to talk about their teaching and learning in the classroom in a positive way is one thing that comes out of teacher evaluation and it has to be taught.

Mr. McKay went on to point out that if the evaluation document was used as a checklist only, the entire procedure could be accomplished in one 30-minute visit to the classroom and a discussion with the teacher: "Check, check, very good, check check, you are excellent. I really enjoyed working with you," and the teacher writes back "and I really enjoyed you evaluating me." Instead, he stressed the importance of the process. "To me the process is a lot more than that. We do complete the checklist, but when I do an evaluation there will usually be anywhere from five to 15 additional typed pages attached with descriptions and recommendations." Following each observation, Mr. McKay writes up a one-to two-page description for the teacher that the teacher can decide to have included as part of the evaluation document.

One area where Mr. McKay had firm views was about the importance of planning for successful teaching. He made it clear to his teachers that he would be concentrating on their planning because in his opinion "the teachers who are the most successful, the most successful at meeting the needs of different children, are the teachers who plan and plan and plan." He explained to his teachers:

> Planning is an area that's so important to me. I break planning down into all sorts of dimensions. I make sure that everyone has a current program of studies, has all the current curriculum guides and handbooks. I like teachers to share with me their daily plans, their weekly plans, their monthly plans, and their yearly plans.

Mr. McKay identified two areas where he would like to make changes in the evaluation document. One was to be more definitive in the area of recommendations for continued learning. He thought that both principal and teacher might discuss goals and how the principal could assist the teacher as mentor and colleague so that recommendations were more cooperatively planned and carried out. The other area was to focus more on strategies for learning rather than strategies for teaching. Given the direction in this school on cooperative planning, content integration, and the development of lifelong learning skills, he felt that this would be a much more appropriate focus.

Asked to describe his image of a good teacher, Mr. McKay again placed emphasis on growth. The teacher should be child-centered, positive, encouraging, and supportive, one who ensured a high level of esteem in the classroom and who encouraged learning. He went on to talk about the purpose of schooling: "We are teaching, assisting people to lifelong learning. We have to teach them skills and strategies, and that's what we have to have as our focus." In his present school, he noted, teachers were already moving into a nongraded system. "In our truest words, we celebrate learning, we celebrate growth."

Thus it was not surprising to find that the focus of much of the effort of staff and administrators in this school is on helping individuals—students and staff—to grow. The predominance of information found on the staffroom bulletin boards regarding formal learning opportunities for teachers—inservice activities; new programs to pilot; tertiary courses to enrol in; the informal conversations between staff members during lunch or recess break about what they are doing in their classrooms, how they are doing it, and how they could have done it differently; and the way in which programmed time was allocated to allow all teachers at different year levels to plan collaboratively clearly reflect the importance that this staff places on continued professional development and growth.

The Teachers' Experiences of Evaluation

Because of the high proportion of teachers new to the profession at the school, the previous principal had completed the first-year teacher evaluations prior to his arrival. The eight teachers interviewed varied in experience from four to 18 years. Some had been employed and received evaluations in other jurisdictions prior to their employment with All Saints Catholic. All had been evaluated between three and five times throughout their careers, but for three of the teachers those evaluations had been at least five years ago.

Preparing for the Evaluation

In the experience of some of these teachers, early in the school year all the teachers to be evaluated during that year are sent a letter from the principal indicating that they are to be evaluated, and inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss the way the evaluations will occur. Their stories reflected the procedures outlined in the district document. In the words of the principal,

> We pull them together and begin to discuss the process. I think everyone takes comfort in these meetings because its not a one-to-one type of thing. It involves all of the teachers to be evaluated as well as myself and the assistant principal as the evaluators. We share the plan and timeline that I have laid out, and the official evaluation forms that must be completed. I usually start by outlining the things that are important to me, the kinds of things I will be looking for, and asking the teachers for their reactions.... We also introduce some rules of thumb. The fact that there will be a minimum of seven visitations—seven observations by myself; every observation will be conferenced—it will be preconferenced and postconferenced; all visitation will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

The principal sees teacher evaluation as "a very positive thing" and believes that if teachers are to truly have the opportunity to grow as a result of the evaluation experience they must be comfortable with and fully understand the process before it begins. At a later time, the principal or assistant principal speaks to or leaves a note in each of the teachers' boxes, requesting a meeting with each of the teachers to arrange a time or times to observe the teachers in their classrooms.

The Preconferences

In the experience of the teachers at St. Clare Elementary, their preobservation meetings appear to take two different forms. In the first type of preobservation conference teachers reported that principals tended to outline the specific areas that they would be looking for in the lessons they observed, and the teachers had little, if any, input into establishing the criteria to be used in the evaluation. Generally, the criteria discussed in these conferences were those set out in the district's evaluation policy; however, in some instances principals had particular things that they felt were important for teachers to exhibit in their teaching, and therefore they included these in the list of criteria for the evaluation.

For many teachers who experienced this approach to preconferencing, the preconference was a frustrating and stressful experience, as they felt that in order to receive a good evaluation they had no option but to produce these materials for the principal even though they might not normally plan their programs in this way. Teachers felt that this placed them under a lot of unnecessary pressure. The time spent producing such plans to satisfy the principal could have been better spent preparing learning materials for the lesson that was to be observed, and thus they believed that this approach to preconferencing could prevent them from performing their best in the classroom.

In the second format a number of teachers had experienced at St. Clare's, teachers placed much less emphasis on the facets of the evaluation cycle. Where the principal was in the room on a daily basis and often participated in the lessons, and where professional development was so much a part of their normal staffroom conversations, teachers were much less apprehensive about evaluation. One reported that the principal had given her the opportunity to decide the subject areas in which she would like to be evaluated and the classes she would like to have observed.

> I was asked what area I would like to be evaluated in, which was nice because when you're a new teacher you can't be an expert in every area at once, so if you are not familiar with one area, you get to choose one where you feel you can do a good job and showcase who you are as a teacher.

Teachers reported that having some input into the decisions about what was to be observed made the process of evaluation less threatening for them. For one teacher, however, the principal asked that she be observed teaching her most difficult class. When asked if she knew what specifically the principal would be looking for, she responded, "I don't think she wanted to structure it that way. I think she wanted me to grow with this and to look at it later and think about what happened and what could be improved ... I felt this principal really did understand me and care about me."

The Classroom Observation Experience

Regardless of their years of experience, the teachers at St. Clare Elementary school have found the evaluation experience somewhat stressful. In the words of a 30-year veteran, "I still feel that it is somewhat of a threat. Having someone there judging your every move—you can't help but feel threatened." Although principals thought that they could allay these concerns, one teacher pointed out that this was unlikely: "Most of the principals would say something like 'I don't want this to be a threat. I'm coming to visit but I don't want this to be a threat.' But I don't know many teachers who wouldn't consider it somewhat of a threat as opposed to something that's seen as very positive—an opportunity where one can share without fear of reprisal of any kind, where one can be yourself in your classroom."

Or in the words of a third year teacher:

> Even though the principal may have been in your room a number of times to just visit, and they have told you in the past that you are doing a good job, there is still that nervousness.... the uneasiness of someone writing down what you are doing, what you are saying, what the kids are doing, and so on.

However, despite the fact that all of the teachers in this school find the classroom observation experience somewhat threatening, a variety of positive and negative reactions were expressed in relation to this experience. These reactions tended to be related to a number of factors including the teacher's attitude toward the evaluation process; the relationship between the evaluation process and the teacher's professional development experiences; the nature of the relationship that existed between the teacher and the evaluator; and the teacher's perception of the evaluator's level of expertise.

Attitude toward teacher evaluation. Teachers at St. Clare Elementary school who reacted positively toward the classroom observation experience tended to look at the experience as being a fundamental and important part of their learning as a teacher. They believed that the evaluation experience was just one part of their overall professional development and understood it to be related to the other professional development activities conducted in the school. In the words of one such teacher who had had a number of previous excellent evaluations:

> To me it was a very positive growing experience. At first I was quite apprehensive because there were quite a few discipline problems in that class, but I felt the principal really did want me to improve so I agreed [to be observed with that particular class]. On the day of the evaluation my principal was in the classroom with me. She watched the lesson and transcribed everything that I said and did. After the lesson we went to her office and talked about the lesson and ways that I thought it could be improved—what I could do to enhance the instruction part of it. We agreed that I should teach the lesson again but this time from a different perspective.... It was a really positive experience. I looked at the whole thing as a growing experience and that's what it was for me. I really appreciate the principal helping me with this ... because it was a really difficult situation ... and I want to do the best that I can in those kinds of situations.

In cases where teachers' experiences of the evaluation process were less positive the teachers seemed to suggest that the evaluation process was disconnected from their everyday work and their professional development experiences. Teacher evaluation was viewed by these teachers to be very much an administrative process that has to be conducted by principals to satisfy the requirements of the district administration. In the view of one such teacher:

> I think teacher evaluation is more of a duty—something that has to be done. If you're a principal and you have new teachers in your classrooms you need evaluations to collect the documentation you need in case of parent complaints. You need to be able to show that you've got something on file that says these are the teacher's strengths and these are the teacher's weaknesses.

Closely associated with teacher attitude to the evaluation experience is the relationship that exists between the teacher and the evaluator.

Relationship between teacher and evaluator. The data provided by teachers from this school seem to suggest that where a teacher is familiar with the evaluator, where the teacher and evaluator share similar philosophies of teaching, and where the evaluator is no stranger to the teacher's classroom the evaluation experience can be positive for the teacher.

When asked why a particular evaluation experience was so positive, one of the teachers at St. Clare Elementary School suggested:

> For one thing, it was done by my principal who had been in and out of my classroom on many occasions. She had a good understanding of how things worked in my classroom on a day-to-day basis. She had been in there when things were chaotic and when things were angelic. She had seen it all. She knew what my classroom usually looked like. She knew how I handled my parents and my kids. What is more, she shared the same philosophy of education as me, and so she was able to understand what I was trying to do with my children. This made it wonderful.

For many of the teachers interviewed, the discomfort they felt during the evaluation process was lessened by principals or evaluators who made it a habit of regularly dropping in on them in their classrooms. In this way a number of teachers argued that the evaluation visit became just another visit, and not something to be feared. Many of these same teachers expressed the belief that their anxiety over being evaluated increased when the principal or evaluator went into their classroom only in order to carry out their evaluation. In the words of one of the younger teachers:

> I like it when the principal just drops in. Betty has been in quite a few times. She brings people in on tours around the school. Sometimes she just comes in and sits and watches. At other times she gets involved in the lesson and works with the children. It has got to the point where the kids don't even notice her in the room. I like it like that, and that's why I felt so at ease with this evaluation.

She went on to compare it with an earlier evaluation which she had found much less rewarding.

> In the other one, I was in the school for two and a half years and the principal was literally in my room twice. So when he came in it was a big deal. The kids hadn't seen him in the room and so it was a big shock for them. I really like the informal dropping in. It really put me at ease when the actual evaluation was being done.

A teacher of considerably more experience also noted that

> Its really an important thing for the administration to do—to pop in and out and make lots of informal evaluations—to get to know you and what you do in your classroom on a daily basis. They should be popping in and out, without having to make a special arrangement to come and watch. They should just come in and observe ... Take it as it is, and do that several times to get a general idea of what goes on.... There are lots of things that you do throughout a day that would be perfectly fine to be evaluated on and you would like the principal to see. If after a few visits the principal is not sure how a teacher is doing, then they could do a more formal evaluation as part of this process.

Thus these teachers believe strongly that the evaluation exercise must not be a "one-shot deal." They argue that by developing a relationship with their evaluator over a period of time, their level of anxiety with the evaluation process can be significantly reduced and the understanding that their evaluator forms of their work can be greatly enhanced.

Not only does the relationship between the teacher and evaluator affect the teacher's evaluation experience, so too does the teacher's perception of the evaluator.

Teachers' perceptions of their evaluators. One of the most commonly expressed concerns about the evaluation experiences of the teachers at St. Clare's related to the teachers' concern that the level of expertise of their evaluator can significantly affect their evaluation. Many of the teachers interviewed expressed the opinion that their evaluators were unable to evaluate their performance in the classroom accurately, or to contribute significantly to their growth through the evaluation exercise, because they did not possess the appropriate or up-to-date knowledge to do so. One of the teachers interviewed illustrated this point in the following way:

> A number of years ago I was involved in a string program in our school system. In this program the students were split up into four different groups, the violins, violas, cellos, and basses. As you are working with one particular group of students you expect the others to practice on their own. As they have their instruments in their hands there was no way that you could shut them up, even if you wanted to, so you expect them to practice on their own and in their respective groups.
>
> One day, however, the principal walks in. He was an authoritative type. He walks into this class and watches this going on and finally at the end of the lesson he said, "You lack discipline in that classroom. Those people shouldn't be making any noise while you're instructing this group." I felt that that was an inappropriate assessment of the situation. I guess what I'm saying is that because of his lack of experience and understanding of that particular setting, his observations were nowhere near where they ought to have been.

This teacher went on to suggest that evaluators need to understand the content and teaching strategies appropriate to the particular subject and identified peers as possible evaluators.

> If indeed evaluation is not meant to be threatening but rather a positive growth experience, then it seems to me that another classroom teacher with the appropriate expertise and who is respected by other teachers could act as the evaluator. They could go into the teacher's classroom, observe what is going on, and share this information with the teacher. They could model a class for the teacher in their own or the teacher's classroom. In this way the whole thing is nonthreatening and teachers are encouraged to acknowledge their own and other expertise. The vast experience of more experienced teachers can be shared among the less experienced.

However, the knowledge that many administrators are perceived to lack when it comes to teacher evaluation does not always relate to subject specific knowledge as in the case above. In another situation, a teacher described the strategy that he was using with a student in his class who had been diagnosed with a particular medical condition. In this situation, after discussing the child's classroom behavior with his parents and his doctor, the teacher agreed to adopt an approach to this child's problem whereby he did not insist that the student take notes in class and keep a lot of careful note work in his folders. Rather, he agreed to let the child just listen to the work as it was presented in class and to try and involve him in the classroom discussion. The teacher pointed out that an evaluator would need to be cognizant of this information not to judge the situation inappropriately.

Thus teachers' evaluation experiences can also be affected by their perceptions of their evaluators' expertise and knowledge of the contexts in which they are working, and the people with which they are working.

Teachers' attitudes toward their observation for evaluation purposes was heavily influenced by their level of comfort with the evaluator, how familiar the principal was with the teacher's class and teaching style. Where there had been a lot of interaction, teachers were not only more comfortable with the process but also expected that the principal would be able to identify things they might do to improve.

The Postconferences

Just as the amount of time and the focus given to preconferencing varied, so also were there differences in teachers' involvement in the postconference process. All the teachers regardless of their employing jurisdiction had had at least one meeting with their evaluator following the classroom observation. For some teachers this was only one stage in a cycle of visits, while for other teachers this was their only discussion prior to receiving the final form for approval. In those situations where postconferencing was part of a sequence of visits, the teachers found the experience valuable. Most often these visits followed within 24 hours of the observation. One teacher described how the principal had gathered detailed information about her class and in the ensuing discussion had left the teacher feeling positive about the experience.

> She did something that was helpful and that was scripting. Instead of writing "this child was out of his desk" or "this child shouldn't be doing that," she picked out what I was saying to the children and how I interacted in a positive way. It seemed that she was watching for the positives more than the negatives, so when we did my conference ... even though she brought things to my attention that I could improve on, she really stressed my strengths, so I had a good feeling after leaving.

Another teacher who realized that the principal wanted to help her grow had been asked to teach her most difficult class. During the observation the principal "actually transcribed everything I said and then we went into her office and talked about the lesson and ways it could be improved and what I could do to enhance the instruction part of it." The teacher found this process more detailed than any other evaluation she had received and learned, she said, not only about the importance of positive statements in controlling student behavior, but "through this process I realized that I will always be growing as a teacher and learning. It's never going to stop, and it shouldn't. I just felt that this principal really did want me to be the best, to have the best potential as a teacher that I could possibly have."

After each session, one teacher explained, she had been asked for her reactions to what had gone on during the lesson. Both the principal and assistant principal had visited her classroom and each had taken notes. When her final evaluation form was prepared she was pleased to see that all the comments referred directly to the notes taken during her observations and she concluded, "so I knew it wasn't a guess—at least I knew it came from something valid."

All teachers had met personally with their evaluator for a final discussion about their evaluation. Some saw this as part of their right and were prepared to discuss their ratings. One teacher explained the process she was familiar with: "We had the opportunity to ask questions or to change things. The teacher has a say. They [the administrators] don't think that because it is written up, it is carved in stone. It is done with the teacher involved, at least in this school." However, the willingness to discuss one's teaching varied among the teachers. In contrast, one veteran teacher commented, "There isn't much process. It is written up on the form, then you are shown it and if you agree with it, you sign it and then it goes in your file, and that's it." Asked about the amount of discussion surrounding the comments, the teacher responded with a sense of frustration, "It's already done. It's hard to really discuss because it's already said and done and it's on that paper and you can't really change it."

The wariness behind a surface compliance between evaluator and teacher was evident in this teacher's description. "He had written up an evaluation and prior to that being sent off to whomever it was going, he asked me to come in and he went through each one of the areas that I was being evaluated on." The principal commented on things he had observed and these were positive, but the teacher expressed concern that in the end "these forms are going off somewhere and I think there is always a concern about who else is reading them." This teacher also had had a disagreement about the specific rating used in one category. She felt that the principal had ignored the amount of time she had invested in a particular project in the previous year and seemed unaware of the amount of time she was spending on developing testing materials for her class. Because she was not attending professional development seminars, her grade was lower, and she concluded that what she was doing was of less worth in the principal's eyes. Nonetheless, she signed the form.

In reviewing teachers' comments about the entire process, two areas came to the fore: the teachers' perception of the appropriateness of the process; and the fairness, reliability, and validity of the criteria used in the evaluation.

Teachers' perceptions of the appropriateness of the process. One of the concerns mentioned most frequently by the teachers at St. Clare's Elementary School was their belief that the process was subjective and as such neither fair, reliable, nor valid. Teachers felt that the current process whereby one person, usually the principal, performs the evaluation was potentially unfair. Their claim was generally made in the following terms:

> It's very subjective. It depends on the person being evaluated and whether the evaluator has a completely different philosophy of teaching or teaching style. I'm not sure, but I think that might affect the outcome—It's very subjective.

A number of teachers suggested that if the evaluator shared a similar teaching philosophy to the person being evaluated, then the evaluation would be much fairer—the implication being that neither evaluator nor teacher would have to compromise their own beliefs and values in order to obtain a good evaluation.

Teachers also raised questions about the reliability of this method of evaluation. In the case of one teacher who raised this issue, the team approach used in her evaluation was considered to have prevented her from receiving a possibly poor evaluation. In this case the teacher had been observed by both the principal and the assistant principal. The assistant principal had observed the teacher at work on a number of occasions, both formally and informally, and had therefore had the opportunity to develop a good sense of the teacher's skills. The principal, on the other hand, had seen only one lesson prior to working with the assistant principal to write up the final report. From the comments that each evaluator gave to the teacher independently, she was not certain whether she would get a satisfactory or unsatisfactory report. One evaluator seemed to be very positive and encouraging, while the other seemed to have reservations and concerns. As it turned out the evaluation was satisfactory. However, this experience highlighted for this teacher the potential unreliability of the current evaluation process.

In a number of the interviews teachers suggested that when they were being evaluated by someone whom they knew to have a completely different teaching style or teaching philosophy to their own, they would adopt the evaluator's teaching style, or the style that they felt that the evaluator wanted to see, rather than teach in their usual way during the periods of classroom observation, in order to please the evaluator. One of the newer teachers to the school illustrated this very well with the following story.

> The only time I've not received a very good report was when I was in Moonrise School District. The evaluation was done by someone from outside the school who had a completely different teaching philosophy and background to me. He had been a Phys. Ed. teacher in junior and senior high school and was coming in to evaluate a grade 4 class. So when he came into my classroom where the children work in groups and where there are more open classroom policies I think he was really surprised. He clearly didn't like it and so he went away and wrote me a poor evaluation and sent it back saying that he would come back and give me a second chance.
>
> Well, I did what I had to do. I played the game. My whole lesson was very traditional and highly structured. The children were seated in rows and weren't allowed to be actively involved in the lesson beyond the traditional answering of questions from the teacher and seatwork. It was not my style of lesson, but hey, if you want a job and you want a good evaluation you do that. And it works. I got a glowing evaluation which I just felt like ripping up because it wasn't me. I was doing it for him because he was my ticket and I had to do it the way he wanted it done. I hated that.

Other concerns expressed by the teachers of St. Clare's Elementary School related to the use of the four-point grading scale: excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory. Their concerns appeared to be of two types. The first related to the subjectivity involved in evaluators deciding on the category in relation to years of experience. In the words of one of the teachers:

> It depends a lot on who is doing the evaluation and how they interpret the scales. For instance some principals never give anyone excellent, while others give different interpretations to excellent depending on the point you are at in your career. For a young teacher the principal might think that for this point in their career their performance should be rated excellent across the board although improvement in all of these areas would be expected, whereas for a more experienced teacher of the same level of skill, the principal may only rate the teacher as satisfactory across the board. What worries me is that the people who see these evaluations don't know that this is the way the principal has approached the evaluation. What is more they don't know if other principals have approach the task in the same way. So the gradings don't really tell you anything.

The second concern related to the criteria used to differentiate between one grading level and another. As one teacher put it, "What is the difference between excellent and very good anyway?" Teachers in this school generally did not have a clear understanding of the criteria that evaluators were using in their evaluations or of the relationship between these criteria and the grades that they were receiving in their evaluation reports. Many of these teachers argued for the adoption of a two-level scale: Satisfactory and unsatisfactory; and for the inclusion of more descriptive comments in their evaluations. As one teacher put it, "Maybe it's sort of black and white and we should be doing more comments." A more experienced teacher pointed out the discrepancy between teacher and student assessment.

> I really dislike the rating system. I believe that we should be treating our teachers the way we treat our children in the classroom in the sense that we expect our children to develop at different paces, we encourage cooperation in their learning, and we don't expect everybody to be in the same place at the same time. I can visualize a system where instead of being awarded a rating in each category on the evaluation form the evaluator simply picks out the teacher's strengths in each of the categories and then identifies just one thing that the teacher should be working on or thinking about improving—not a massive comprehensive list because it would take a person years and years to deal with all of those things—but just one thing that the teacher can work on improving.

This teacher went on to argue that because teachers have varying levels of skill and experience, it is inappropriate to measure their performance using the same set of criteria and the same rating scale. He argued instead for a differentiated method of evaluation of the kind he outlined in the quote above, whereby evaluators can acknowledge the differences between the teachers being evaluated by the kinds of things that they identify for the teachers to work on and improve.

Teacher evaluation and teacher growth. Teachers at St. Clare's Elementary School almost unanimously agreed that their evaluation experiences alone have had little impact on their growth as teachers. Most suggested that all their evaluation experiences did was to confirm what they already knew about their own practice. For one teacher, the evaluation was merely a reinforcement of her current practice:

> I can't say that I really learned something about myself or what I should be doing as a result of the evaluation process. All I can say is that after discussing my evaluation with the evaluator, I felt that what I had been doing had been reinforced.

Even though she had had positive ratings, another teacher expressed disappointment that her evaluation experience had not provided a direction for future growth. In her words,

> The principal had stressed that "very good means very good and that it doesn't mean that you are lacking in these areas," so there weren't a lot of things that I thought I could really work on. I did want the "excellents" on my report but I wish there had been something specific that she had picked out that I could have worked on.

Unanimously, however, the teachers at this school suggested that informal discussions with their peers, cooperative planning, team teaching, interclass and interschool visitations, and professional development and inservice days were most important in fostering their professional growth. According to a teacher new to the school:

> I grow professionally by attending professional development activities both within the school and within the district. From working with other teachers—I learn something from every single teacher that I work with, the new ones and the more experienced teachers. I grow professionally from attending workshops and conferences and from discussing the different types of lessons and plans that I'm working on with administrators and consultants and a student from the university who has been monitoring one of my programs.

Other teachers clearly concurred in these sentiments. They learned by "observing or noticing or seeing the success that somebody else has been having using different kinds of activities, different kinds of techniques, or different kinds of models and then trying them myself." They learned from "observing teachers actually teaching. To this day I still recall and use some of the techniques that I observed in other teachers' classrooms," and they learned from working with others. "When you work with other people you are going to get different ideas, things that you may not do or may not have thought of doing, and you want to try them out." The importance of informal discussions was also emphasized:

> I don't think the evaluation procedure itself helps me to grow professionally. Other things have helped me along more. A lot of times it's just the more casual, informal type of thing where you have the opportunity to cooperatively plan and work with other people—more experienced people at times—and the kind of informal evaluation that goes on when you come back to the table and talk about what worked and what didn't work and why it might have and why it might not have. You pick up a million ideas and things about yourself and your approach to teaching that way.

Thus, according to the teachers at this school, self-assessment and peer assessment based on informal observation and analyses are the most important elements in stimulating a teacher's professional growth. As one teacher put it, if evaluation is to truly foster professional growth, "we have to find a way to put into place a system of ongoing self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and where necessary the more formal administrative kind." To be sustained, such initiatives need to be fostered by the leadership in the school. As indicated in a few incidents in the school, the influence of the principal in linking professional development and teacher evaluation in an informal way was evident: "It's how she conducted herself throughout the year. We had professional development continually and she would make every person in the school feel that they were wonderful teachers and that they were growing. She was just like that." At the same time, teachers saw themselves as their major resources in teacher growth.

> One has to question the purpose of evaluation—the reason for it. If one of the reasons is to help the teacher grow, then the evaluation must be extremely nonthreatening and very positive, and the individual must be empowered and enabled to address any areas identified as needing to be developed.... The individual needs to know what they have to do to improve and they must be working in an environment that has been set up to enable them to be able to improve.... We are professionals working together cooperatively. We speak of cooperative learning in the classroom, but I think we also have to speak of cooperative learning for teachers.

Discussion

From these teachers' stories of their teacher evaluation experiences, a number of themes emerge.

The first has to do with the *teacher's attitudes* toward the evaluation process. As suggested by one of the teachers, the evaluation experience can be positive provided teachers see themselves as learners and the process as helpful in improving their teaching. If teachers see their evaluations as an integral part of their overall professional development, then their evaluation experiences can be positive as they become stimuli for future learning. However, these teachers perceived the evaluation experience as being separate from, or unconnected to, their overall development as a teacher, the entire experience was frustrating and threatening.

This belief has major implications for the way teacher evaluation is managed by school and district administrators. It would appear that if the evaluation experience is to contribute genuinely to a teacher's overall professional growth, then it must be arranged in such a way that it is an integral part of the teacher's professional development activities. The practice of adopting the teaching style preferred by the administrator in order to gain satisfactory evaluations clearly brings into question the validity of the evaluation process, for under such circumstances it can hardly claim to be evaluating the teacher's classroom behavior. The need for the evaluation and the focus of the evaluation must emerge from the learning needs of the teachers.

The second theme has to do with *trust*. It is clear from the evidence presented in these stories that the quality of the evaluation experience is closely linked to the level of trust that exists between teacher and evaluator. Many teachers suggested that it was important for their evaluator to spend time in their room, getting to know them and their students and establishing an understanding of what it is like to be in their classroom on a daily basis. When this was done, the teachers believed that they were able to develop a closer relationship with their evaluators, in which the evaluators could develop an understanding of their philosophy of teaching and how it manifests itself in their classrooms. Through their informal comments about the teacher's teaching and things that could be approached differently, both would feel comfortable about the giving and receiving of advice based on the realities of the classroom. In this way the level of anxiety teachers experienced with regard to their evaluation would be reduced.

The implication here is that any evaluation must not be of the one-shot type. Evaluators must ensure that any formal evaluations are part of an ongoing process of observation, monitoring, and sharing of ideas. Further, the evaluator should be someone with whom the teacher has established an ongoing working relationship.

The third theme to emerge from the data concerns the *teachers' perception of their evaluators' expertise*. Teachers in this study clearly believed that it was important for their evaluators to have an adequate knowledge of the subject areas in which the teachers were being evaluated and of the contexts in which the teachers were working. Many teachers felt that their evaluations were inaccurate or unhelpful because their evaluators' lack of knowledge of the particular subject or context prevented them from understanding accurately what they were observing. Evaluations based purely on the teaching skills observed, and not placed within the context of the specific curriculum, were thought to be of little use in helping teachers to grow. The implication here is that either the evaluations should be done by someone who has current knowledge of the particular curriculum area involved, or that the evaluations should be undertaken by a panel of people that includes an appropriate curriculum expert, perhaps another teacher.

The fourth theme to emerge was the *subjectivity of the process of teacher evaluation* currently used in most districts with which these teachers were familiar. The problem of subjectivity was understood to relate to both the differences in the decisions that different evaluators made in the allocation of grading levels to teachers, and also to the use of different interpretations of these grading levels for teachers at different points in their career. The teachers strongly believed that the most appropriate grading scale for any evaluation process should be a two-level scale: satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Further, they suggested that the report of any evaluation should consist of descriptive comments based on selected criteria rather than of check marks on some arbitrary scales.

The last theme to emerge from the study relates to the relationship between *teacher evaluation and teacher growth*. It was clear from the comments of these teachers that, in their experience, formal processes of teacher evaluation contributed little to their professional growth. In contrast, teachers strongly suggested that their professional growth was enhanced through their informal interactions, observations, and discussions with other teachers, either within the school, or at conferences and workshops.

On the basis of these themes, then, it would appear that if teacher evaluation is to be a productive and useful part of a teacher's professional growth; it should be undertaken as an integral part of the teacher's ongoing professional development activities and should arise out of, and focus on, a perceived need of teachers; it should be conducted by an individual or group of evaluators with whom teachers have had opportunities to develop ongoing professional relationships. These people should posses the appropriate knowledge to be able to accurately assess the teacher's performance within the context of their particular subject(s) and classroom(s); these classroom observations should result in the production of reports that are descriptive of the teacher's performance in relation to agreed upon criteria rather than in a series of ratings in respect of these criteria; and finally, the reports should be directly related to the teacher's professional development. Reports should point to teachers' strengths in respect of each of the criteria and indicate areas where the teacher needs to develop further. Ideally, reports would also provide advice on how teachers might go about developing these skills further.

St. Ambrose Junior High School

Opened in the late 1960s and added to the school is situated in an older residential area but along a wide avenue linking two major roads into the city center. It is one in a series of schools along this avenue and is neither old enough nor recent enough to be noticeable for its architecture. Rather, it is a comfortable, slightly worn, friendly building starting to show its age.

St. Ambrose is a large junior high school housing about 700 students in grades 7 to 9. Once it served local children from the surrounding elementary schools only, but today its students are more often bussed in from new subdivisions without secondary schools. Some years ago when the enrollment had declined to under 500, a French immersion program was housed in the school. Today that program is flourishing.

Because of its reputation the school has attracted and retained teachers who enjoy teaching academically oriented adolescents. As the school population gradually declined, transfers and retirements helped to maintain the positions of those staff who saw themselves as St. Ambrosians. Today the school population has almost doubled, and to cope with these increases many new staff have been engaged. Some have come from other junior high schools, some from high schools that have been faced with declining enrollments, and others are teachers relatively new to the profession.

The school has retained a firm tradition that continues to permeate the values of the staff: "pride in your school, pride in how you work toward success, and in terms of community, doing your best." But like all schools with a long history, especially one that has faced a period of decline, considerable insularity developed. The teachers who remained at the school during that period were very committed staff; they had made the school "a very comfortable place for the people that were here. They were good friends and had worked together for years." The principal and many teachers spoke positively of this continuing tradition of support.

However, the modern adolescent has pressures never faced by students of 20 years ago, and the relationship of today's family to the school is also different. To be effective, today's teachers have to be aware of and work within these trends. The principal, Mr. Pawlik, described his task as confirming the strength of and building on the rich history of the school while being "open to possibilities, to looking at things the way they can be rather than the way they are." It means trying to retain the school's strong sense of community, but also realizing the need to link with, contribute to, and learn from the larger community. It means challenging routines to test whether they are the best way to achieve the staff's goals for students. He respected the knowledge of his staff, but also encouraged them to rethink their attitudes and actions. These initatives can challenge continuing routines, and the principal, recognizing this, commented with humor: "My critics, I'm sure, would say I'm looking for too many things to change."

During his four-year tenure in the school, Mr. Pawlik showed that he was prepared to listen. He began by meeting individual teachers in informal discussions where he tried to get a sense of what they thought was important, and then moved to introducing alternative ideas to individuals and groups, and eventually to working with the entire staff. At a recent professional development day, the morning was devoted to doing a needs assessment of the school as a first step in a long-range plan, an initiative Mr. Pawlik acknowledged was generating "a great deal of discussion and controversy and some divisiveness on staff. We're going through considerable professional philosophical turmoil." He went on to explain the core issue: "We have to be more accommodating to the social and emotional needs of our students. We want our senior students to be positive and hopeful. We don't want to fall into the trap that high schools want us to be—a sophisticated screening ground for them. We must put a high priority on our interactions with students." Although teachers were accepting of these ideas in the abstract, it was the specific changes concerning discipline procedures, or teaching more than one subject to the same class to reduce the numbers of different teachers, that had occasioned these discussions. "People are having to evaluate what's happening," he concluded, "the wiser ones certainly realize that we can't do things the way we did them 10 years ago, even though it was successful."

The Teacher Evaluation Policy in Practice

The teacher evaluation policy is the same for all schools in the All Saints Catholic School District, and all principals are required to follow similar procedures: an initial explanatory meeting "to establish an understanding of the process of evaluation;" observation; a postobservation conference; and the development and sharing of the final report. Although the procedures do not specify preconferences, or the number and timeline of observations to be held, or that a postconference should follow each observation session, certain conventions have arisen in the district. They are, however, at the discretion of the individual principal.

At St. Ambrose's, Principal Pawlik begins by meeting with his two assistant principals to decide who will be responsible for the evaluation of those teachers identified on the list he has received from the District's personnel office. Mr. Pawlik himself takes responsibility for evaluating teachers new to the profession. The evaluators of other teachers are chosen on the basis of subject area. Each administrator has responsibility for some subject areas and works with the curriculum coordinator in those areas on all matters related to curriculum and instruction.

Teacher Evaluation Procedures

Each of the three administrators approached their evaluations slightly differently. Principal Pawlik met individually with the teachers on his list and told them he would "like to drop in a couple of times, and I'd like you to suggest when I should drop in. I'm just going to make a note of what's happening and provide you with some feedback after." He went on to identify the kinds of information he gathered: "It's certainly not scripted.... I'll note the time frame. It's something I think is useful for people. They don't reflect on how they are chopping up the class period. I'll note favorite phrases, I'll note rapport, the physical interaction, the exchanges." Following the lesson, he met with the teacher as soon as possible and gave some feedback, "totally nonevaluative, the first couple of times," then he identified more specific types of information they could focus on. He tried to observe the teacher for more than one class in sequence. "You learn a lot from beginnings and endings." Finally, after the fifth or sixth visit, "I sit down with them and give them a draft version of the form, go through it, give them my advice and observations, and give them a chance to respond or question." Based on the information the teacher provides, he make changes to the draft and prepares a final document that is given to the teacher for signature.

At times, Mr. Pawlik found it difficult to balance the demands of the principalship with the time necessary for evaluations. He explained that "What I like to do is to set up a rapport with the teacher, then observe, and then give feedback, but I haven't been able to do it as I would like. I'm constantly being interrupted by emergency situations." Although some of these situations were due to the absence of one of his assistant principals, others were part of the expectations of staff that the principal would be available.

He felt that although his observations tended to confirm what he already knew about the quality of the teacher's teaching, they were beneficial to the teacher because of the feedback he provided. The tradeoff was the anxiety such evaluations seemed to produce in teachers, especially when teacher and principal disagreed on the ratings. At the same time, he felt such procedures were necessary because "there has to be due process." If only weak teachers were evaluated, he pointed out, then one was open to a charge of prejudging the teacher. Referring to teachers he had worked with in previous years, he noted that teachers had both been helped and had worked through their difficulties.

The assistant principal, Mr. Ruffolo, followed a similar sequence with the teachers he was designated to evaluate. He approached teachers individually, informally notifying them that they needed to be evaluated this year and asking, "When can we get together and talk about some of the things that you're going to be doing in the classroom, and so that I can come in and observe some of these good things?" This happens about the middle of October so that he can make his first classroom visits about the end of October or the beginning of November. During the preconference, Mr. Ruffolo and the teacher together decide on the focus of his observations. He identified probable topics: "questioning technique, the use of language, content, presentation, the closure, the objective being followed through, the interaction with the students in terms of modeling, practicing." He follows the "practice in this school" and makes about six visits to the classroom between November and April. Like Mr. Pawlik, he expressed frustration with the lack of sufficient time: "That's one of the disadvantages of the whole process of evaluation—there is never enough time to do a more than adequate job."

Both the principal and assistant principal mentioned the difficulties raised by the rating scheme. The principal disliked the tension created by disagreements that arose with teachers in discussing the final ratings. He noted that he tried to do a fair evaluation. Although he had had some criticism that his expectations were too high, he knew he was consistent within himself and within the district framework. The assistant principal voiced similar concerns. In his previous school, he and the principal had discussed their philosophy concerning evaluation, the things they were going to observe, and what criteria they would use so that they had a common understanding about each of the rating categories. Because they had not done that in this school, he was less sure that his expectations matched those of his fellow administrators.

Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

For both administrators, teacher evaluation was a way to help teachers reflect on what they were doing in the classroom and to give them opportunities to talk about their teaching. They saw it as a personal discussion with the teacher and therefore did not bring all the designated teachers together for the initial discussion. Mr. Ruffolo explained the focus of evaluation for him:

> I see myself as assisting the teachers to be successful in whatever they do. Because if they are successful in the classroom, I'm successful as an administrator. I'm looking at evaluation as a positive. If there is a discrepancy, such as teachers not doing the job they ought to be doing, then it becomes my job to work with the individual to get him in tune with the rest of the staff and with what's happening in education.... It becomes my job to try to bring workshops into the school to help teachers be up to par.

For Mr. Pawlik and the assistant principal, the teacher-student relationship was the foundation of successful teaching. Mr. Ruffolo stressed its importance when he described a good teacher as

> an organized person with a good relationship with students; one who listens to what they are saying; a teacher who is flexible, fair, and consistent; one who is not threatening, knows the subject and how to present it well;

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> a caring individual; an individual who is not afraid to communicate students' success with parents, and if there is a problem, is willing to work with the kid to help him out. The human aspect of teaching is very important, especially at the junior high level.

Both administrators chose to be highly visible in the school. Principal Pawlik had given up teaching so that he could be more available to staff. He made a point of going to classrooms rather than having students come to the office. "I'll knock—often doors are open—and excuse myself, say Hi to the class, and ask if I may speak to the student." As well he tried to be in the hallways when there were class changes and sought reasons to go and talk to people rather than have people come to him. In these ways, Mr. Pawlik both modeled the interaction he sought from his teachers and tried to establish a comfort level that would lower teachers' anxiety about having him in classrooms. Similarly, Mr. Ruffolo dropped into classrooms to "say hello to the kids, and talk to them about issues of importance to them, such as to remind them that formal exams are coming."

The assistant principal had regular contact with the curriculum coordinators in each of his designated subject areas, and when teachers were working on a new project they often invited him in to observe. He described initiatives he had undertaken to bring some workshops into the school to help prepare teachers in one area for changes in curriculum and instructional strategies. He described it as a long-term project that involved not only the workshops but also encouraged teachers to visit classrooms in other schools where they could see other teachers use the procedures successfully.

> This is one of the areas I'm very keen about. To bring teachers along so that they all feel part of the same team. I see my role not as a supervisor, but as part of the team. We are all in this together and hopefully it will be to benefit the kids. Because then they are comfortable with me as a person whose task it is to facilitate their role.

For these administrators, developing a school culture that stressed a positive orientation to students both within the classroom and the school was their major goal. This orientation ranged from teachers' casual interaction in the hallway to teaching that evoked a positive response from students. They saw their long-range plans as means to enhance the student-teacher relationship by developing a nurturing environment that would meet the social and emotional needs and growing independence of adolescents. Professional development activities would now focus on bringing this plan to fruition. In this way, Mr. Pawlik saw the best of the school's tradition retained and enhanced.

The Teachers' Experiences with Teacher Evaluation

Eight teachers agreed to be interviewed concerning their experiences with teacher evaluation. Initially they had responded to an open invitation from Mr. Pawlik, and then he had spoken directly to teachers to ensure that both beginning and veteran teachers from a variety of subject fields were included. Four of the teachers were female and four male. Two were teachers with less than five years' experience, while two had over 25 years of experience. They all taught in one of the core areas and usually taught at least one other subject. Those teachers who taught in the immersion program were evaluated by the administrator who was proficient in that language. Most of the teachers had been at St. Ambrose for less than eight years and all but one had been evaluated by a member of the present administration.

The teachers' experiences are described in two sections: The first contains their stories of the process of evaluation and their reactions to that process; the second contains the delineation of two themes, collegiality and trust, that arose from these descriptions.

Preparing for the Evaluation

The teachers at St. Ambrose had had similar stories about the general procedures used for teacher evaluation. One veteran teacher who was new to the district and the school outlined the process.

> One of the assistant principals, Mr. Merriot, met with me and explained the process to me, showing the policy guidelines and describing the evaluation format. He had me look over the type of instrument he was going to use to evaluate me. We talked a bit about the types of classes I had, where I was in the curriculum, anything that was happening in the classroom that might be of note, and he set up scheduled times to come and see me.

Other teachers told of similar experiences, noting the opportunity to take the policy and procedures document away and read it. Some teachers were given the option of choosing to have only scheduled visits. Most teachers encouraged the evaluator to pop in informally as well.

Teachers were familiar with the criteria used. One teacher commented on its thoroughness: "They look at every aspect of teaching as far as interrelationships with staff, things like questioning, long-term planning, year plans, objectives, your objectives being met. It is very thorough and precise."

In most cases the administrators combined in one interview with the teacher discussions about the process with information about the teacher's context and the specifics of the classes they would observe. The informal and low-key approach to teacher evaluation adopted by these administrators, coupled with providing time to answer teachers' questions, seemed to help teachers feel comfortable with the process.

Classroom Observations

For most of the teachers interviewed, their observations took place over a two-week to two-month period. The observer usually began informally. "First, he came in and just sat in on two classes and did no evaluation, just to get the kids comfortable with his presence." Often the observer stayed for at least the beginning of the second class.

> He came in on two separate occasions, not consecutively, and then on another occasion he followed me for three periods, and so he saw me progress from class to class and I think it gave him a pretty good feel for what was happening on a continual basis. It also had him see me in very different work situations and it made me feel very comfortable with the fact he was there.

For one teacher, the observer combined short, informal visits with scheduled observations.

> My classroom is close to the office, and I had told him to come in whenever he wanted, so he popped in often. They were doing experiments and things like that and he would just walk in to see what was going on; or I would be giving notes and he would come in and see how the class was behaving. There were four or five specific ones that he had set aside, but otherwise they were mostly informal.

Another teacher asked not to be told ahead of time when the observer would be arriving because "whatever I was doing I wanted to be doing it within the flow and I didn't want to disrupt my classes. Because, if I knew he was coming in I would give that extra push and I didn't want that. I wanted it to be as authentic as possible." This teacher's visits covered about two months in midyear. Asked about their duration, she responded that they were generally for the whole period. "Sometimes there would be two of the same class in sequence. I think I was evaluated on how well I got the students settled, did I greet them at the door, etc., etc., and once I got them settled and started my lesson, he would leave since it was the same lesson again."

In contrast, the teacher who had been evaluated at a different school in this same district, commented that the evaluation had been very informal, with the principal making one formal visit and two visits of "five to 10 minutes" over the space of a couple of weeks.

Teachers were aware of the focus of the evaluator's observations and were able to identify specific topics on which they had been evaluated. One teacher described the process in some detail:

> The way I interacted with the class was one, the way the class behaved towards me, classroom discipline, lesson and unit plans. The principal did an interaction sheet. He kept track of whom I spoke to and what other students were doing at the time. He wrote down parts of the lesson he thought were not progressing well, and then compared it to parts he thought were really good. He tried to collate them to show me what I did right in one part that could be focused on in another area.

Teachers appreciated the spacing and extent of observations and knowing what was to be the focus of the observation.

The Postconference

Although most teachers did not identify a regular preconference meeting with their evaluator after their schedule of visits had been set, they all identified meeting after each classroom visit. Where the visits were in close proximity, the discussion of what had been observed flowed naturally into a discussion of the focus of the next lesson.

> Then, during the week or week and a half he was coming into my classes, we would meet following each session and just talk about what was happening. He would ask me specific questions. He would say "What was the focus of your lesson?" and "What were the objectives and can you explain how the lesson went?" and I would explain it. He wanted me to lead in and my responses were pretty much what his observances were. He suggested some changes or he asked me some questions about specific details.

The teachers reported that the evaluator drafted a final evaluation report following the observation sequence.

> At the end of the sequence, he talked with me one final time and then wrote up my evaluation and shared it with me.
>
> He made observations, we had discussions after both, he wrote up a report, gave it to me to look at and there was an opportunity for discussion.
>
> I thought he was very professional, meaning that he stuck to the point when we discussed it. We went through sequentially all of the different categories within the evaluation form.
>
> We decided that we would meet after the evaluation observation to confer and decide.... Later in the week, we met for half an hour and he basically discussed exactly what he had seen and what he felt had happened and asked if there were any concerns or problems. He took the initiative to say what he felt had happened in the classroom, and then he asked for my response, whether I felt he was on the right track or if I felt comfortable with the actual evaluation. He allowed some input. He explained a lot as to why this was such and such. We went through the whole thing and it was done very quickly and not a problem.

One teacher had disagreed with his evaluator. He explained that one of the areas where they had disagreed was over the specificity of his lesson plans, for although his evaluator wanted a lesson plan and had described what kind of details had to be there, "I felt it was only necessary to write sufficient for myself to understand how to deliver the lessons. As far as I was concerned for me to write out a lot of stuff that I had already had in my mind was totally unnecessary." Nor did he think it was necessary to provide it for the evaluator "when you are coming in for a one-day shot and not knowing how the whole chain is developing." He went on to explain, "Although I disagreed with him on many occasions, he went ahead and wrote his statement that he did not feel that I was adequate in those areas and I know that I was allowed to write a rebuttal and that goes on my file downtown." For this teacher, these were personality differences and differences in teaching style rather than matters of substance. He compared the report with those he had received from other administrators in previous years and found the evaluator to be inconsistent.

Teachers' Reactions to the Process

All but one teacher included in their descriptions of their experiences that they had found the process to be "very fair" and fairly comfortable. One teacher noted that while there is always a somewhat artificial atmosphere in the room and, therefore, he was teaching a little differently, these difficulties were more than outweighed by the "very beneficial feedback" he received. Teachers relatively new to the profession talked about how much they had changed over the course of two consecutive evaluations. One described his previous evaluation as "a little nerve-racking because it is pass or fail and you are on-the-spot performing." By his second evaluation he noted, "I think I have evolved a lot. I'm much more comfortable with this evaluation because this year my confidence is twice as high. I didn't feel I had anything to hide last year but it was just unnerving—a little bit." For one of these teachers the additional stress was very clear:

> As a beginning teacher I was more aware of what I had to learn than of getting evaluated. I was mostly nervous because I wanted to get my permanent contract.... I think because I was teaching language arts it was a bit scary because it was a new subject to me and it was one of my evaluator's areas of expertise The way he approached it [teacher evaluation] was pretty positive but still, it was an evaluation, it was sort of like life and death, you are going to teach or you are not going to teach. That made it scary. With my evaluator walking into the classroom—that was fine, but because it was a permanent contract or not, that made it scary. Any time he walked into the classroom I knew I had to make a good impression.

Yet, despite the stress, the end result was similar to that of her colleague.

> The evaluation made me more confident in my teaching. I was able to risk some things afterwards—some new ideas-whereas previously I went by the book. Because I am more confident in my teaching now, I can express myself better to the students. I think I am more aware of the students' needs now that I am relaxed a little more. It also gives you a different status in the school. You are a good teacher: It gives you a pat on the back.

Although veteran teachers were more comfortable with the evaluation procedures than beginning teachers, both neophytes found the process fair.

Teachers varied in their views on the impact of teacher evaluation on their daily teaching. One teacher, who appreciated that her observations had been spread out over a couple of months, had found the whole process "affirming." However, she thought that she already had a good idea of her own strengths and weaknesses and found that "there were no surprises." She explained the result of this congruence of perceptions: "What that does is make me try to highlight the positives more." Another teacher also mentioned the benefits of positive reinforcement and explained that as a result of the evaluator's observations he had received advice about changing the emphasis of his lessons. For him, this interaction helped to break down the isolation of the classroom. One teacher differentiated between positive feedback, "which gives you a sense that you are doing something right" and constructive feedback, where the evaluator pointed out a problem of which she had not been aware. A veteran teacher explained that for him there was a strong link between self-evaluation and formal evaluation. He noted that he was "always trying to give the best product to the kids, and evaluation gives a secondary perspective to that." Like the teacher who found the process affirming, he appreciated having a second opinion on areas where he could improve. He noted, "if you ever stop you are in trouble because the kids are constantly changing and you have to adapt to that change."

Although they found teacher evaluation to be useful in enhancing their teaching, teachers mentioned colleagues as the most important source for their own professional growth.

Collegiality

Almost all of the teachers interviewed mentioned the cooperative atmosphere in the school. A teacher in his first year saw it as setting a standard to aspire to. "I think we all grow from learning from each other. The situation here is excellent in the fact that the staff sets a standard for this school and stepping into it you almost want to raise to meet that standard." Teachers learned from informal conversations in the staff room. As one teacher explained, "This school is full of good teachers and just sitting in the staff room and listening to what they have to say I get ideas. I could sit there and say this is a problem and they would say, did you try this? or this? You can get a lot of information from them." A similar point was made by three teachers who emphasized the value of discussions with colleagues who taught the same subject. Not all teachers talked about curriculum matters during their breaks. One teacher mentioned that for him the staff room conversations were more often social occasions.

Teachers not only shared ideas and suggested instructional alternatives, they also shared materials. One newly arrived teacher seeking to establish the level of specificity required in lesson plans found that "Teachers in this school are very cooperative and I looked at their plans," and another teacher mentioned that colleagues were very willing to share exams. Most of these teachers seemed to find the collegial atmosphere in the school both a challenge and a support.

Although professional development days and inservices were mentioned as possible opportunities for growth, teachers were involved less frequently. For some, the stumbling block was the requirements of extracurricular activities, for others, the need to obtain not only funds but also substitutes. In a brief description of one inservice he had attended recently, a teacher highlighted another perennial problem. The workshop was one in a series that the teacher appreciated but, "Quite often it's unreal. It makes you feel good but these people [the workshop leaders] are very successful and have certain skills that are more developed than those of the rest of us. So when we go back to the classroom on Monday, some work and some don't. It's hit and miss." He went on to explain that he still appreciated these sessions because the topics they focused on were applicable and needed. Those teachers who did attend inservice sessions spoke of the benefits as being the opportunity to talk to teachers from elsewhere in the system, which helped them get a different perspective on issues. Three teachers mentioned the professional development days that were planned by school staff. One teacher mentioned her enjoyment of these activities although she noted their generic nature, while two teachers mentioned the recent professional development day when the staff had focused on needs assessment and suggestions for change.

Trust

The teachers at St. Ambrose Junior High School were generally satisfied with their own evaluations. They stressed the importance of the teacher-administrator relationship in creating that situation. The strength of the procedures was dependent on their confidence in the person who did the evaluating. They saw the system as potentially open to abuse, but were concerned that there were equal problems with bringing in external parties to do evaluations in those circumstances.

One veteran teacher discussed the fear that seemed to be associated with evaluation. For him, the insecurity of people who were afraid of making mistakes is heightened because they go to great lengths to put on a performance for the evaluator. Their unwillingness to accept comments when their performance is critiqued by the evaluator causes stress between teacher and administrator and sometimes a loss of trust. These teachers, he contended, saw teacher evaluation as a game to be won rather than as an opportunity for growth.

The issue of who should be involved in evaluations depended for these teachers on the extent of rapport between evaluator and teacher. For one teacher, having the administrator who knows him on a day-to-day basis, and who sees him working with his students both inside and outside the classroom is much less threatening than someone from central office. Yet teachers were also aware that this rapport was sometimes missing, and in those cases wondered whether two administrators or an external evaluator might not be preferable. The teacher whose previous evaluation experiences included one that had been extremely brief wondered about the value of evaluations that were only "going through the motions." Thankful to have received a positive report, she still wished that the evaluation had been more helpful. She commented on the subjectivity associated with the criteria and suggested that honesty was as important as rapport. When she had been evaluated as a first-year teacher, she had received a glowing report. She admitted that she had done a lot of extracurricular activities for the school and supposed that those might have influenced her evaluation. In retrospect, she resented the fact that the evaluation had done little to help her teach and wished that she had received a more realistic appraisal of her classroom teaching.

Although the teacher evaluation form focuses on generic teaching skills, some teachers wished that their evaluator had been more knowledgeable about their subject. This was especially true of beginning teachers, but others also spoke of the benefits of having a person observe who would give feedback in terms of the presentation of the content. Another benefit of this sharing, one teacher suggested, was that it would help teachers in the same subject field choose a similar orientation to teaching the subject. The alternative point of view was raised by another teacher who pointed out that advice on ways to teach particular content would be best left to a consultant rather than an evaluator because there were many ways to approach a particular concept.

Discussion

Although St. Ambrose Junior High School has a large staff, the stories of the teachers who were interviewed concerning their experiences with teacher evaluation were quite consistent. The following themes are evident from their discussions.

Fairness. Teachers saw the process as fair and comfortable when they felt that the administrator had made a genuine effort to see them teach in a variety of situations and had respected their concerns about the timing of these visits. Even those teachers who had concerns about their reports saw the process as fair, even if they did not think they had been treated fairly themselves.

Trust. Teachers saw trust as crucial to the success of the evaluation. Although they themselves had had positive evaluations, some teachers were concerned that the procedures were open to abuse. In the two situations where teacher and evaluator had disagreed about aspects of the evaluation, trust had broken down. Both teachers blamed the administrator involved rather than the process.

Feedback. For these teachers, obtaining information that confirmed and extended their teaching was important. Otherwise, they thought evaluation was "only going through the motions." Some teachers wished their evaluator had been able to provide specifics about their subject area. Although most of their discussions were about teaching, teachers did stress that evaluation "should benefit the kids."

Collegiality. For most of the teachers at St. Ambrose, the level of professional discussions that took place both formally and informally on a regular basis were a major aspect of their professional growth. The formal meetings were departmental and subject focused, whereas informal discussions most often occurred around the staff room table. Formally planned professional development opportunities have not been a major aspect of these teachers' continuing learning.

St. Lawrence High School

St. Lawrence High School is a modern building situated in a landscape of undulating grassy knolls in a growing subdivision of the city.

The city deliberately mixed apartments, townhouses, and single-family dwellings in its housing design for the subdivision, and the area has attracted people from a wide variety of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. With a population of approximately 800 students, the school reflects the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the neighborhood. The subdivision has a strong sense of community, and the school has close community links through its after-school programs for adults. Its reputation is such that it has had to close its boundaries to students from other areas of the city.

St. Lawrence High School has a staff of approximately 40 teachers and is departmentalized. The principal, Mr. Grant, has been an administrator in a number of the district's high schools and enjoys being at St. Lawrence. His administrative team consists of two assistant principals, one new to administration but not to high schools, and the other with extensive experience in administration but new to high schools.

The major focus of the school is on student learning and the administrative team monitors students' progress in a number of ways. Each administrator is the coordinator for a specific grade and keeps closer contact with those students.

Another way of monitoring student progress was in the review of report cards. The administrator for that grade level read and put personal comments on every progress report before it was sent home. During the marathon, discrepancies in individual student marks between similar subjects such as chemistry and biology were noted. Such variations might indicate a problem in the way the teacher marked or a personality conflict between teacher and student.

The third way administrators monitored students was in being visible in the hallways. Asked if he did so to find out what was happening in the classrooms, Principal Grant responded, "I walk the halls to see what is going on in the halls." Partly he did so to enforce the school policy of being either in a class, in the library, in the cafeteria, or outside. He also used these opportunities to talk to students on an informal basis. He tried to attend sports practices and to sit down with students in the cafeteria. If he needed to speak to a particular student, he called the appropriate classroom on the intercom and asked the teacher if it was appropriate for the student to come to the office. Assistant principal Leger also enjoyed walking the halls, but even more liked popping into classrooms. "I will just knock on the door and walk in," he explained. Asked if he made a point of visiting the classrooms of those teachers on his evaluation list, he replied,

> No, but then I'm in just about all of the classrooms. I will walk into a phys. ed. class and just walk around and see how things are going. I believe in hallway administration too and for a couple of reasons: One, to get the kids out of the hallways—otherwise it becomes a hang out—and get them into class; two, it gives you a good feeling of how things are going in the school; three, it gives me the opportunity, if the classroom door is open, to go in and just watch the students working, and the other thing is it lets the kids get to know me.

While Mr. Leger found out what was happening by popping into classrooms, Mr. Grant learned about classroom activities through the students who came to his office, the reasons for student absenteeism, and from reviewing the progress reports.

> We don't walk around looking for kids jumping around the room—if that's happening, someone is going to complain. Or if no homework is being given or assignments are given and not marked, we'll get a phone call or letter on that, but in the time I've been here I've never received that kind of letter. I'm fortunate in that we have an extremely fine staff here.

Because of the expertise on staff, Mr. Grant saw professional development as another way teachers could and did help each other on an informal basis. He used the science department as an example. The science rooms were adjacent to each other, and so there were always teachers working in the science area. "Any time during the day you can usually find two people in there, and during lunch hours or before or after school you can find most people in there. They are communicating and sharing back and forth so it's informal peer coaching." Mr. Leger suggested that this sharing was fostered by the teachers themselves. He described how he himself had shared approaches and problems with his colleagues and how these discussions had led to his developing an alternative instructional strategy. "There is a real openness to learning among the teachers," he concluded.

The school timetable is organized so that classes finish about 2:30 p.m. on Thursdays. On the first Thursday of the month, the faculty council, involving administrators, counselors, and coordinators meets. A general staff meeting is held on the second Thursday, academic staff meet on the third Thursday, and on the fourth Thursday a professional development activity is organized. The academic meeting usually involves discussion of curriculum changes from Alberta Education, reviewing achievement test results to determine areas of weakness, discussing the implications of involvement in pilot projects, and determining ways the school as a whole might best meet the needs of students. Recent meetings included discussion of timetabling one class for two subjects with two teachers. This would allow the two teachers to combine classes if they wished, to develop cooperative projects in the two subject areas, and to develop projects that could be evaluated in both classes. There is an active student council, but the time taken from classes is monitored carefully. The school is proud of its reputation as a caring but challenging school. Staff enjoy working there, and visitors easily feel the welcoming atmosphere from both students and staff.

The Teacher Evaluation Policy in Practice

Like other schools in the All Saints Catholic School District, the administrators at St. Lawrence High School follow the policy and procedures guidelines passed by the school board. The principal, Mr. Grant, outlined it:

> In early September, the assistant superintendent will send out a computer printout listing all the certified staff, and in each case it will indicate the rating of the last evaluation, the school where the evaluation took place, the evaluation date, and the reason for the evaluation. I then meet with him and we discuss who is to be appraised in the current year.
>
> In this current year, according to the policy, 19 or 20 of the 40 teachers at this school were in need of an appraisal. But because there are some teachers new to the school who have had an appraisal done in the last year or two, we negotiated to leave them alone for the present time. The 16 certified staff to be appraised were divided up among the three of us. I worked with eight teachers, and the two assistants who are teaching worked with four each.

Three of these teachers were on temporary contracts, so their evaluations were completed by January. The principal went on to explain that teachers were assigned to one of the three administrators based partly on areas of expertise, for example, one of the assistant principals was fluent in the second language taught in the school and so was assigned to work with the two language teachers, but also on choice. "Other than that, we looked at the list and basically said, 'I'd like to work with this particular teacher,' and that's how it was decided."

The principal then outlined the particular procedures used at St. Lawrence. First, the three administrators called the 16 people together and sat down in an informal situation to talk about what appraisal meant. They gave each teacher a copy of the school system booklet containing the policy and procedures, including a sample of the evaluation form. Principal Grant explained, "We talk about the form, we talk about the process that we have at the school, and we try to make people feel at ease." He then identified four ways they tried to do this.

> Number one would be to indicate that the main purpose is to help make teachers better teachers. Often teachers see this as a means of declaring them stagnant, incompetent, or a manner by which they could be transferred out of the school. [Second], so there has to be a feeling of trust created and that is something that can't be done in one informal meeting with people. It's something that has to be built up over the years in the ways you deal with people. [Third], we have to emphasize that we are looking not only for areas where we think improvement can occur, but also for areas where we think outstanding work is being done. And [four], for us to observe and make a note of this in order that the proper people are aware of their strengths.

Then Mr. Grant talked about arranging observation visits. He explained that the demands of the job frequently prevented all three administrators from keeping commitments, and rather than have teachers prepare and then worry because the observer did not appear, the principal proposed an alternative. The observer would speak to a teacher in the morning and ask if that day was a good one to visit the class. He pointed out that there are perfectly acceptable reasons—from giving a test to having had a rotten sleep the night before—for the proposed time to be inappropriate. He had been using this system for over 15 years and had found it worked well for both parties. Mr. Grant also spent some time reviewing the categories on the evaluation form and indicating "what kinds of things we look for." Finally, he outlined the next steps: a meeting with the evaluator to set objectives, observation, and then postobservation conferencing concerning the final report. From this point, the evaluation process was directed by the particular administrator involved.

The Administrators as Evaluators

Mr. Grant described how he handled his appraisals. He began by meeting with the teacher and discussing possible targets for improvement. In his view, the teacher was the best person to know where he or she could improve, and he asked teachers to identify two or three targets. Because he had been in the school for a number of years he frequently identified areas that the teacher had also identified, but occasionally he added some the teacher had not considered. After some discussion, these are written up and the teacher and Mr. Grant each have a copy. He gave examples of targets:

> It might be something as simple as to get to school on time or earlier, or to get involved with more things outside the classroom, or it might be to try to be a little more empathetic and understanding with some of the problems that the kids have. To not fly off the handle. It might deal with parental communication, or rapport among staff members.

Then the principal makes a visitation and tries to provide a written summary of the visit to the teacher within 48 hours. The summary "usually involves a description of the class and what I call observations and questions. In the observation, I may put down something really great or I may put down what I wasn't so sure about and I may make a suggestion." A copy of the summary is given to the teacher and another kept on file in his office for reference in writing the final report.

Following a second round of observation and summary, the principal begins the process of formulating the final report. He begins by asking if the teacher "would like to do a preliminary rough evaluation on the actual form." Usually teachers are not enthusiastic about doing so and therefore he explains to the teacher that this is the step he uses to discuss any discrepancies and come to agreement about the final ratings:

> If I see anything as unsatisfactory and you see it as higher, I will explain very clearly to you why it is unsatisfactory. If I come in at satisfactory and you think in a particular category you should be very good, or if I put down very good and you think it should be excellent, then I want to hear why you think you should be at that particular ranking.

He went on to explain that what he saw in two or three 80-minute periods was incomplete and that, especially in areas concerning spiritual and professional development, he depended on the teacher to provide him with information. "It's an opportunity for them to blow their horns a little bit and to give me information so that I can include it in the official form." For Mr. Grant the time spent on negotiating the ratings was important so that there were "no surprises" in the final report. It was a time when he and the teacher shared their understandings of what excellence in teaching meant, and it sometimes provided him with opportunities to praise those teachers who had underestimated their attributes.

Mr. Grant then observes the teacher for a third time, and following that visit, prepares the final form, which the teacher is asked to sign to indicate that a copy has been received. The teacher may add a comment, and then the form is sent to the assistant superintendent for inclusion in the teacher's file. Mr. Grant concluded, "Hopefully, the teacher can say, 'It has been a great experience. I learned a lot and though I was concerned at the beginning, it turned out to be a very pleasant situation.'"

The assistant principal who had held previous administrative positions, Mr. Leger, was familiar and comfortable with the procedures outlined by the principal. Although the basic format was the same, his procedures differed in some details from those described by Mr. Grant. At the first meeting to go over the teacher's objectives for the year, Mr. Leger made a point of reviewing "the entire process again to make sure they are aware of all the steps and comfortable with it." Mr. Leger thought preconferences were important in determining the focus of the observation, so he notified his teachers that

> for every classroom observation we will have a meeting beforehand and we'll determine exactly what that observation is to concentrate on—whether it's questioning technique or classroom instruction, motivation, discipline, or whatever—and I let them know that I script, then review the notes in the light of what I'm trying to observe in that class. If something else comes into play, unless they want me to include it later on, I won't include it as part of the evaluation.

He also tried to reassure teachers by pointing out that their teaching style did not have to match his to be rated excellent. From his own experience, he was well aware that teachers could achieve similar outcomes using different teaching styles. At one of his meetings with the teacher he focuses on planning, "short range, intermediate, and long range" and on the assessment of students' progress. He spoke about how one teacher gave him examples of his exams and he was able to relate questions to the specific class he observed. In describing another teacher's tests, he commented, "I see that the questions match with the way he is teaching and what he is teaching so that he is teaching to an objective and also testing that objective."

Following the initial meeting to establish and review the teacher's objectives, the observation cycle began.

> For every classroom observation there is a meeting beforehand so that they are well aware of what's going to be observed, there's the observation, then I sit down and write up not on a form but just what I saw and give them a copy. We sit down afterwards and talk about that and any recommendations and feedback from it.

After "at least three" of these cycles spaced over the year "one prior to Christmas, one between Christmas and Spring Break, and one after Spring Break," in a meeting similar to that described by Mr. Grant, Mr. Leger asked the teacher to draft a final evaluation form. He himself also prepared a draft form. When they met to share their analyses, Mr. Leger found agreement on almost every point for all four of the teachers he evaluated. His feedback from these teachers was that they found the process valuable because they had to reflect on their teaching. One teacher admitted that he might have taken the whole experience somewhat flippantly had he not started to examine the wording of each category carefully and appraise his work honestly. He attributed this change to the sincerity of the observer and the constructive nature of the evaluation.

Asked if he thought the process had affected these teachers' work, Mr. Leger said he had been fortunate in appraising four very good people and that although he had made suggestions for improving or extending what they were doing, he noted that these were suggestions. However, in providing the suggestions he asked the teachers for feedback about whether the idea was useful, how it worked or failed, or other alternatives they had pursued, and all four teachers had given him some information about his suggestions.

Ms. Waters, the newly appointed assistant principal, also held preconferences: "not more than 15 minutes, usually before class starts, during the day, at noon, or perhaps after school the day before. Often the teacher does not know the focus of the lesson until that day." Their importance was reinforced for her when one of the teachers commented that "they appreciated having someone who knew what it was that they had done last day rather than just walking in. They liked the opportunity to say, 'This is the set up in the class, this is what we are working on, this is where I tend to go today, and this is the topic that we are working on.'"

During her observations, Ms. Waters used scripting but discarded it when she found herself focusing only on the teacher. She found experienced teachers most interested in their interaction with students, the impact of their instructional strategies on the students, and the activities of the students during the lesson. Therefore, she broadened her focus and tried other data gathering strategies. She held a postconference after each classroom observation and found it difficult to keep these within the 48-hour deadline suggested by Mr. Grant because they took longer and required the juggling of two schedules.

All three administrators followed the same general format toward evaluation but had developed their own patterns within it. When the final drafts of all documents were completed, each assistant principal met with the principal to discuss the final ratings. Principal Grant explained that this was essential to ensure consistency of ratings and to avoid the problem of having the same teacher evaluated by two different administrators and receiving divergent ratings. He acknowledged that he was known for being too harsh and too high in his expectations because he didn't give excellents "unless the teacher was able to take a group of 10 to 15 average, everyday, doing what is expected of them teachers" and demonstrate teaching strategies that were new to them. Both assistant principals identified the same issue of consistency of ratings. One thought that a teacher's ratings were in the satisfactory range, only to discover that colleagues thought that the teacher was very good in those areas. The other commented that "I think the biggest difficulty is getting a standardized definition of satisfactory, good, very good, and excellent" and suggested that satisfactory was a sufficient rating. The other concern they all commented on was their inability to make more specific observation plans because of the demands on their time.

The Administrators' Orientation to Evaluation

Mr. Grant had been involved in teacher evaluation at the high school level prior to the introduction of the district policy. He saw it as needed because "nobody was telling teachers that they were doing a good job." Teachers who had been teaching for over 20 years had never had an administrator visit their classroom to observe them teach. In that school, he had used much the same system of informal requests about an appropriate time to visit. He had written essay-type evaluations, and unless it was an obvious case of teacher difficulty, teachers had the option of deciding whether the information should be forwarded to their human resources file. This thrust toward providing positive feedback was also clear in his description of what evaluation should be, "a pleasant, informative, valuable experience for both."

In many ways, the philosophy on teacher evaluation of the other members of the administrative team, Mr. Leger and Ms. Waters, was similar to that of Mr. Grant. Both also stressed the importance of evaluation as a constructive process. Mr. Leger pointed out, "if an evaluation isn't constructive and it isn't meant, then it's useless. If it's only to evaluate somebody and not have them grow from it, then we are wasting a lot of effort and a lot of time on a process," a sentiment similar to

Ms. Waters's who pointed out that such evaluations "weren't helpful for them, and certainly weren't helpful for me."

Ms. Waters, who had had previous consulting experience, was quite comfortable working with teachers to improve their teaching. She completed two evaluations on teachers with temporary contracts and had followed the plan outlined by Mr. Grant. She called them traditional evaluations because the reduced time frame limited how much professional development could be achieved. In working with two experienced teachers, she found herself having to grapple with the issue of teacher involvement identified by Mr. Leger. She admitted that "of all the things that I did this year, this is probably the one thing that I felt most concerned about, the thing that has given me the most heartache." Both teachers were competent instructors and had been her teaching colleagues in previous years. Her reaction to the change in relationship highlights the difficulties of moving from a collegial relationship to "one where, although evaluation can still be peer evaluation, it's not viewed that way and can threaten the relationships that have been established previously." She noted:

> for those teachers who had been teaching a number of years, my biggest concern was to make this something that could be professional development for them. I wanted them to identify something that was an area they wanted to work on this year and I would try and assist them in whatever way that I could, whether it was observing and providing them feedback, or trying to help them find other information, or whatever they might be interested in. That was my main focus but I found it to be much more difficult to do than I had anticipated.

She explained that although teachers may identify something to work on, unless they take ownership for these objectives, they are not interested in developing professionally. From her own experience, she found that being asked to identify some targets for the year encouraged her to make time for those things she wanted to do. But she did not read the same enthusiasm in the responses of some the teachers she appraised.

Although her experience with one teacher was very successful, "professional growth for both of us," in another case, she felt that she was unable to help the teacher see more possibilities in her teaching.

> I really didn't feel that what I was doing was helpful and I didn't want to go into the classroom either because I really felt that I was in there snooping and they had to put on the dog and pony show and I had to go and watch it and then give them feedback and say, "Oh, that was good."

Sometimes it seemed that teachers who were experienced in evaluations identified items like "closure techniques" because they knew evaluators would be able to pick that out. It was an answer they were looking for. Less interested teachers left the decision to the evaluator. Ms. Waters pointed out that when teachers were already considered competent, the evaluation was not about retention or dismissal, so "if it's not something that's going to be for them, I don't think there is much point in doing it." She also experienced frustration when teachers "know you are coming in, set up a certain type of lesson." That kind of evaluation process, she felt, was not helpful to either party. At the same time, she acknowledged, these teachers have had several evaluation experiences already and are not about to change their views because she wanted them to consider hers. It would take time.

Because he had been a member of a team whose task was to interview prospective employees, Principal Grant had attended a workshop to learn how to administer and score a 60-item bimodal response instrument designed to test respondents' "mission, empathy, rapport, drive, individualized perception, listing investment, input drive, activation, innovation, gestalt, objectivity and focus." He had been impressed with the workshop and had given the instrument to three school staff, including one of the teachers he was appraising. What impressed him most was the lists of strengths he had been taught to draw from the responses and was then able to encourage the respondent to consider applying in areas of weakness. He hoped to be able to use the instrument with the agreement of the teacher in future evaluations.

Working in Area of Expertise

Because high schools are organized on departmental lines and teachers tend to teach in one or two specializations, the administrators were asked how they worked with teachers when the content was in their area of expertise. Two of the teachers appraised by Ms. Waters taught in her area of expertise, and she related how "we focused more on how the material was being presented in specific details." She went on to explain that one teacher had introduced an idea incorrectly and that she had used this as an opportunity to correct something the students were probably unaware of but which a good teacher would want to know. This discussion led to other opportunities to discuss specific strategies and methods of presentation. The two teachers commented that they had enjoyed having someone evaluate them who knew what they were doing.

Mr. Leger commented on the delight of the two language teachers he evaluated at his bilingualism. He described how he often popped his head in the door while classes were in progress, interjected a response, and then talked to the teacher in French. He thought this helped students see French as a working language. From the teachers' perspective, he related, "They said, 'It's the first time that somebody has evaluated me in French that understands what is going on in that French class.'" He had worked with them both in the classroom and the language lab. "Maybe they feel a little more comfortable," he added. "They say that it's not like you don't know what is going on so you are going to misinterpret something and say, "What sort of a class is this with everybody talking?"

Although Mr. Leger thought it was possible to evaluate a French teacher and not understand what was going on,

> just by the way the lesson carries on, for example, the teacher questioned most of the students. It wasn't a pattern selection; it was asking them not for a simple answer or a yes or a no or one word answer, but to build into a sentence and even repeating the sentence after them.

He saw advantages to knowing the subject matter. He began by referring specifically to the classes he had observed.

> What came through in the French classes was they repeated the answer that the student gave but gave the proper pronunciation and sentence structure. They corrected the pronunciation and the sentence structure but gave a "Yes, very good" for the specific objective that they were looking for.

He gave similar examples from science and math classes he had observed, both areas of teaching expertise for him, and concluded, "Knowing the background concept helps in that you can see how the teacher is directing the learning."

For these three administrators, teacher evaluation was a means to encourage staff to be more self-reflective. They tried to set up procedures that would encourage teacher participation and saw this element as essential for the experience to be worthwhile.

The Teachers' Experiences with Evaluation

In response to an open request from Mr. Grant, eight teachers volunteered to talk about their evaluative experiences. All had been evaluated within the last two years. Some were in their first year at St. Lawrence High School and on temporary contract, whereas others had been at the school for up to eight years. At one end of the range, two teachers had taught for approximately five years and at the other two teachers had over 25 years of teaching experience. Some taught core subjects; others were specialists in optional areas of the high school curriculum. All but one agreed to be taperecorded and that teacher agreed to note taking instead.

Preparing for the Evaluation

All the teachers described being informed that they were to be evaluated and attending a general meeting called by the administration to discuss the process. The teachers were given the booklets from the school system that outlined the policy and "they explained to us basically what they hoped the time frame would be and how many times they would come in and see us, asked us if we had any problems with any of those." Although most teachers commented that they found this particular part of the process very helpful, one teacher was not so easily reassured:

> We were told what would happen, we were told not to worry and also told of the rating scale, that we were all very good and not to worry about it and that it was not going to be an intimidating kind of thing, that it's supposed to be a learning process, and so that was fine but it doesn't matter if they tell you that, you still wonder.

On the notices for the meeting, the particular administrator who was to be their evaluator was identified.

Meeting with the Evaluator

The meetings with their evaluators were mentioned by a number of teachers. For one teacher the meeting began with a discussion on "what my goals for the year were, how I structure my program." Then the evaluator asked the teacher to identify any areas that the evaluator should focus on. The teacher explained that she "relayed a couple of things that I thought were my weaknesses and if I could get points on them and some strengths."

Another teacher described how the evaluator had gone over the evaluation form with him and "he defined the terms *satisfactory, very good, excellent,* and *unsatisfactory.*" This was also an opportunity for the evaluator to hear about the teacher's previous evaluation and the reasons for his unhappiness with that process:

> I teach French, and the person who evaluated me previously had only a small working knowledge of French and had never taught French, so in the past I was unhappy. I didn't think he had the background to be evaluating me in French. He may understand French, but I never heard him speak any French, he has never taught any French, so how can he evaluate me in what I'm doing? I didn't feel that he was taking a real interest in evaluation. It just seemed to be something that needed to be gotten out of the way.

His discussions with his most recent evaluator were much more positive. "My recent evaluator has taught in French for several years and his knowledge of French was very good, so I felt much better about that. I was being evaluated by somebody I knew would know what was going on, and that makes a big difference and I had respect for the person who was doing it." For this teacher the opportunity to talk through his feelings helped him feel more comfortable about what was to happen. One of the teachers on temporary contract had been evaluated on a number of occasions. Because the evaluation was important in ensuring future employment, the teacher had taken steps to be proactive. "They told us the various questions they would ask at the informal meeting with the evaluator and I prepared everything that I was going to answer." Another teacher had given a lot of thought to the focus of his evaluation and had "spelled it out quite clearly in writing." He had chosen to focus on a specific instructional strategy that he had tried previously and had not been very happy with the results, so "I wanted my evaluator to give me some idea of the success of the endeavor and whether I could have done anything to improve it."

A number of teachers mentioned specifically the procedures surrounding the classroom visits. The evaluators discussed how the dates would be arranged:

> He explained that he wanted to come in and see me three times and then we talked about when would be the best time to come in. I told him me could come in any time and he said, no, he would rather have me tell him when I would like him to come in.
>
> Then she asked what class would I like her to come in and if I minded her popping in to see how things were going.

The procedure of verifying with the teacher prior to formal visits and of checking about their reactions to informal visits was important to teachers. One noted, "The principal explained that the evaluator will check with us beforehand and that made it more comfortable for me."

The Observation Cycle

When teachers discussed their experiences, their most frequent comments concerned their feelings about the three classroom visits. One teacher, who had initially decided to have planned visits, chose a well-behaved class for the first formal observation, but it was not a success: "I was very nervous and didn't teach a good lesson and the kids noticed that all of a sudden things are different." When she explored the situation with her evaluator, they decided that the evaluator should come in informally instead, and those subsequent visits were much more successful.

The teachers' view of the process also had an effect on their comfort with being observed. One teacher, who described the process as "a bit intimidating," explained that for him the process did not reflect the reality of his classroom because he was concerned about the expectations of the evaluator.

> You have to do a sort of song and dance for the evaluator. You have to have your lesson exactly the way you think they want you to present it, and they really don't get an idea of what you are really like. I am more of a relaxed person in my classroom and things work out OK, but an evaluator might be looking at something different, so I really don't like the evaluation process at all.

Teachers varied in their recollections concerning the focus of the observations. Although some had prepared written objectives, others said the discussion about information to be gathered took place on the first occasion only. One teacher admitted that he didn't know what the observer was looking for. Asked how it felt, he replied, "I felt like a student teacher again. Actually I got used to it after a while, but it is a bit intimidating." Another identified the criteria for her first session as "how you have prepared your lesson, how you deliver your lesson, and how you interact with kids."

One teacher described a situation where the administrator had focused on a situation the teacher felt took precedence over the quality of the lesson in the eyes of the evaluator. The principal came into his classroom to observe the lesson, and initially the teacher was pleased with the process, with the fact that he had stayed for the full class and took notes, and that "we met after and spent time together, which I found very valuable and I really did like it." However, the teacher, then went on to describe an incident that had happened during the observation. A student had arrived late, and rather than disrupt the class further the teacher continued teaching. He was distressed that a page of the principal's report on the class was taken up with this event. He had a number of reasons for behaving as he did:

> I was in the middle of a lesson, he was there watching me, I didn't feel that I could turn to the student and say anything, so he took it that I wasn't that upset about it. I could have waited until after, if I'm in the middle of something, it's disruptive for a student to come in late and then it's doubly disruptive if I have to stop, and it will depend on the student as well. Sometimes if students are late constantly then it's something that we have to look at, but in a way that was just a small part of the lesson and he made it an issue.

The teacher was really upset because he had "really planned that lesson well and everything had gone right" except for this incident. When they discussed the lesson, the teacher had explained these points to the principal and he had accepted them. Nonetheless, the issue still rankled a little.

In another situation, the observer participated in the lesson. The teacher began by noting that the principal came in at the beginning of the period and so had not disrupted the lesson. The students who had been told of the reason for his visit "didn't act any different than they normally do, which was good because it gives a better assessment. During the class there were times when the principal was engaged in the discussion that was going on in the class too, which I thought was good."

The evaluator tried to provide a written report of the observation within the next day or two, and teachers appreciated this. The importance of instant feedback was reinforced by one teacher's description. "The first day he came in—I always have lots of people in my class so it didn't make me nervous—he just sat through

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most of the class and within a couple of days he had me down and he had it written up. But before that, he had seen me passing in the halls and he let me know how he thought it went, which was nice. He said there were no problems. He had enjoyed the class." Another teacher had a similar comment: "After every period we spent together, I would always get feedback almost immediately or the day after, and that was good."

Final Postconference

Most of the teachers had been invited to draft their own formal report and they found this process aided their self-reflection.

> After we had done the two evaluations, he asked me to evaluate myself.... At first I thought, why doesn't he just do it? but it didn't take that much time and it did make me think about what I was doing, and I felt good about it when we finished because I realized that I was doing all these things. After we went through it together section by section, he handed me his evaluation. He was kinder than I was and I felt very good. It was a good evaluation.

A similar process was identified by other teachers. One said: "We were allowed to take the form and fill it out ourselves and the two of us discussed it. We both looked at how he rated me and how I rated myself, and that was good. We were allowed to have some input." A veteran teacher also appreciated having input on the ratings. "I was invited to contribute to the final report, which I did, and I actually found that in some areas I evaluated myself harder than the principal. I put myself a point lower on the scale. We talked about that too. We went through and looked at my assessment and his assessment, why I thought as I did, why he thought as he did. The final report was a combination of the two."

One teacher objected to the evaluation process, suggesting that it was a bartering session until the final copy was signed.

Usefulness of Feedback

Teachers were asked whether they had found the process useful in refocusing their teaching. Three teachers talked about specific feedback they had received. One acknowledged, "I got a lot of good pointers out of the evaluation here, which will help me ... but I would have liked more feedback." The teacher who had written objectives was pleased with the results of the process. "It did give me some insights. The evaluator shared some of her ideas, because she has also used it in her teaching. I learned that the things I was experiencing in using this strategy weren't unique to me, or it wasn't my fault. That was reassuring."

Five teachers mentioned the impact of the whole process in encouraging them to self-reflect. For some it was a reappraisal of their teaching: "It makes you rethink what you are doing in the classroom and how you proceed, things that you're doing on a day-to-day basis but you don't have the time to think about." For others, it caused them to consider their contributions to the school: "One thing it does do, it keeps you on your toes, and you do start thinking about what you are doing in the classroom, what you are doing as a member of staff, what you are contributing to the staff, and what you are doing for your students outside the classroom, so it makes you think about getting involved in things because it is going to make me look better."

The impact of having another person in the room was beneficial in another way, as one teacher explained: "Just the fact that they are in your classroom makes you more self aware, and I actually found that when someone was in the room with me, I automatically would start to be more precise." He then mentioned two other changes he intended to make to his classroom interaction and stated that the fact that his evaluator had a math background was important in reassuring him that he was teaching the correct concepts and strategies in a final-year class.

One teacher mentioned another impact:

> It makes you realize how much emphasis people are putting on it. It makes it more difficult just to slide by or fall in a crack somewhere and not keep up. So when other people are asking you, because that's one of the things on an evaluation, "What have you done recently in terms of professional development ?" it makes you realize that it should have a strong emphasis.

Fairness of the Process

Despite having misgivings about the worth of the process or its impact on their teaching, all but one teacher thought that the evaluation process was fair. Three teachers commented that because there was only one opinion and the rating scale review process depended on their trust in the evaluator, there was a potential for unfairness when personality conflicts might arise. The teacher who was dissatisfied with the process felt that it depended too much on the administrator and could become political. He thought that the time spent with each teacher was too short, the administrator was too busy, and that evaluation could be used as a method of exposure to identify those teachers who would be let go in the event of cutbacks at the school.

The possibility of having either more evaluators or having separate peer evaluations was discussed by some teachers. As one teacher pointed out, "I would have liked more feedback and perhaps from more than just one teacher and not necessarily just an administrator."

A colleague suggested involving other teachers in the evaluation process. "Maybe if we could evaluate each other as teachers instead of having the administrator come in, because it would be more of a peer evaluation.

I think we could learn a lot from each other. I rarely get a chance to see somebody else teach, which I think would be helpful." This teacher went on to suggest a format similar to the effective teaching workshops where teachers provided feedback to each other. A third teacher added, "I'm sure it would be more open on both sides. It would be less threatening."

Teacher Attitudes Toward Evaluation

Teachers spoke apprehensively about the process and positively about the outcomes. Although they met together as an initial group and had been given the district's booklet on evaluation procedures, including the evaluation form, some either did not read or did not remember more than the major steps of the process. For example, one teacher asked what happened to the evaluations after they were signed. Another was unable to say where the policy had come from and who had made the changes in the form since the previous evaluation.

As noted earlier, a number expressed the apprehension and nervousness at being observed. Two commented that the only time the principal was in the classroom was either to evaluate the teacher or to find out what was happening with a particular student. Although some teachers were comfortable with the evaluator popping into the classroom, others preferred to control their access to the classroom. Even the principal made a point of stating that he always knocks on the door and when the teacher looks up he asks to speak to that person. However, the architecture in the school includes windows in almost every classroom, so that anyone walking the halls can see what was going on.

One or two teachers believed that teachers were evaluated so that administrators could find out how good they were. They were so apprehensive about the process that they prepared special lessons. Unlike their colleagues they were unwilling to use the process to try out a new procedure. They wanted to be at their best for the observation and were afraid of "bombing" in front of the evaluator. For these reasons, they wondered at the worth of the process.

> I think they know what you are like already, and they have told us that as a group when we were being evaluated, so my feeling on this procedure is that it puts everybody on edge. I feel administrators have to do this because they are required to do it, so it takes away from their administrative time and then teachers are put on edge too for the whole year. All year you are on edge, and personally I don't mind them stopping in, they can come in any time and they do that occasionally if they need something, so I don't think it's really necessary for them to come in and watch you for 80 minutes to find out how you are teaching because they have a sense of that already.

The teacher who had identified specific objectives in writing instead of leaving it to the evaluator to decide what to observe explained why he had chosen to do so:

> It's stressful. I don't care how long you've been teaching. You're always worried that they will catch you on a down day. The kids are usually very good. I don't have trouble with the kids. But sometimes, let's face it, there are times when you are not as good as others. You worry about putting everything on the line just by having a casual kind of evaluation like that.

In all three instances, what teachers believed the process to be about was more important to them than what administrators or the booklet said the process entailed.

Another example of this juxtaposition of belief and experience was evident when a teacher suggested that the present system was "geared to a lecture kind of presentation because the evaluator wants to see what you are doing in the classroom." He went on, however, to describe one class where "I did no instruction" because his students were doing literary skits, which was perfectly acceptable to the evaluator.

When they reviewed the process, the majority of teachers agreed that being evaluated had sharpened their self-reflection. They had paid greater attention to all aspects of their professional life and found this to be of benefit. As one summarized: "Being accountable keeps you sharp, and I can see that if you weren't evaluated you might fall into a dull routine. I think that evaluation makes me focus on everything."

Two teachers mentioned the breadth of the evaluation form and its inclusion of extracurricular activities. For one teacher, the fact that he was coaching before school and had games afterward meant that he had less energy for teaching. An evaluator visiting him now would realize how busy he was, but if he chose to wait for his observation until he was less involved, he worried that the administrator might not realize how much time these activities entailed and how stressful extracurricular activities could be. Another teacher raised the issue of the relative weight given in the evaluation to these activities as opposed to classroom teaching. He was concerned that teachers who were heavily involved in coaching sports spent over 12 hours a day at the school and had neither time nor energy to prepare classes and mark assignments.

The teacher under temporary contract had particular stresses. "Being a temporary contract teacher, you live and die by those evaluations. They are very critical for me getting the next job, so I take it very seriously."

One teacher had been in an number of different high schools in the district and it was his observation that "no matter what they say about teacher quality, about a lot of poor teachers out there, when I see what goes on in a lot of classrooms, it's pretty impressive even though those evaluations are only every five years. From someone who is trying to improve his teaching, there are people who are really trying hard and doing a heck of a good job and you just have to go next door to get some great ideas."

Professional Development

The most frequently mentioned professional activities were reading to keep up to date in one's subject field and attending specialist councils in one's own area. The professional development activities put on by the school were mentioned by only one teacher. One of the neophyte teachers had a number of strategies for his own instructional improvement. "I have a lesson plan, and if at the end of a lesson something didn't work I put it down, so whatever anybody says about lesson plans, they are important to me because next year it will be helpful." This teacher also mentioned learning from a colleague's board work. He used it as a marker for his own pacing and noted that although they shared exams and that saved time, it was his analysis of the test "to see what they have stressed" that really helped him in his planning. The other important source of professional support was through discussions with colleagues.

Teacher Talk

At St. Lawrence High School, staff collegiality in terms of professional conversations varied with the subject area and with the personality of the teacher. Asked about whether teachers shared ideas, one teacher responded,

> Some do, some don't. Those few teachers who are on staff that are vibrant, who are constantly bringing in new suggestions, who are proposing new and innovative differences and changes, those people are the movers and shakers, and when you have people like that who get together and form committees, that reinforcement moves others.

This teacher did not belong to a department that met regularly and she explained the reasons why. "I wish that in our department we met more often. The perception tends to be that you are talking about the same things anyway, but I think you need those meetings. You have to get people involved in those types of sessions to keep the morale and energy level high." Another teacher was in a similar situation. He thought that teachers who teach the same things help each other out in this school, but he didn't have a teaching colleague for most of his subjects. Where the courses did overlap, "we definitely share a lot there, we help each other out with different ideas." Both an assistant principal and the neophyte teacher described situations where much sharing and discussion took place. These did not seem to be common throughout the school.

Discussion

The teacher evaluation experiences described by the administration and teachers at St. Lawrence High School were similar in many aspects. Both teachers and administrators agreed in general on the actions taken to fulfill the policy, but they had differing interpretations of these actions. These are best expressed as a series of conflicting interpretations that reflect the diversity of these experiences.

Divergent expectations. Although the administrators stressed the importance of teacher growth and discussed this at the initial meetings, teachers' previous experiences left them guarded and cautious. Those who viewed teacher evaluation as a rating of their performance felt somewhat betrayed that on one hand the principal said that he knew how good they were and in the next breath said that they were to be evaluated. In these circumstances, administrators who tried to encourage these teachers to identify areas for improvement, weaknesses that could be worked on during the year, were frustrated by the trivial level of problems the teachers identified and hurt by the recognition that these teacher did not trust their evaluators. In these circumstances, the canned presentations were a frustration for both.

Some teachers accepted the position of the principal that the process was for growth and used the year to do a self-evaluation. Others saw it as an exercise where there was the potential of being marked for export elsewhere. For those teachers the overt rationale of teacher improvement overlay other concerns about being "caught" or having "bombed out" and getting a poor evaluation. Only one teacher insisted that he didn't care whether they gave him excellent or satisfactory, he knew from the reactions of students in class how good a teacher he was, and that was all that mattered to him.

Number of observations. The norm in the district for number of classroom visits at the high school level was three, and at St. Lawrence these were spread out over the year. Again, there was a diversity of opinion on this question. The administrators felt that three was all they could manage and that from their other work they had fairly accurate information about what was happening in classrooms. Some teachers proposed that any formal visits were unnecessary because administrators knew already that they were good teachers. Others wished that there were more informal drop-ins not tied either to student behavior or teacher evaluation, so that the teacher and students would get used to having them in the room. The uncertainty surrounding this issue is evident in the conversation with one teacher who, pleased and relieved that his formal visits had gone well, then wished there had been more of them. The teachers who sought more frequent evaluations or peer evaluations mentioned the pressure on the administration as one reason for having others provide feedback from classroom observations.

Outcomes. Again, the attitude of the teacher concerning the process influenced its outcome. Some teachers sought to make the process work to their advantage by trying to limit the evidence available to the evaluator. For these teachers, the final ratings were important in justifying them as teachers. Some teachers used the process to confirm their own ideas about themselves as teachers, and they were pleased at their ratings but aware that there were days when their rating did not match their daily work. They spoke about the ratings as generous, as if they were a gift rather than a reflection of actual practice. Some teachers sought specific pointers for improvement and evaluated the evaluators on their ability to bring these ideas forward. These teachers were unsatisfied when the comments about their work was generic and were very pleased when the person evaluating the class had a background in the area and was prepared to discuss specific content and instructional strategies. Their feelings are captured in the comment of one administrator who explained that having a background in an area meant that he understood the teacher's frustration at the inability of the students to grasp a particular concept because he had experienced it himself. Administrators sought to work within these differing objectives to bring about teacher growth.

Isolation. For a number of reasons the teachers' stories reflected a sense of isolation that influenced the process. Many were specialists, and if their departmental members did not do much sharing of ideas, had few people with whom to discuss the specifics of their classrooms. Others spoke warmly about their discussions with colleagues and the amount they learned from one another. This was highlighted when the evaluator was unable to talk about the lesson except in generic teaching frames such as questioning techniques. The school culture was focused on students, their behaviors, and their achievements. Teachers were part of that culture. When teacher evaluation focused teachers' behaviors and achievements, they were somewhat uncomfortable because they were unused to considering themselves as other than part of a larger purpose. Most used the process to review their contributions to the school. The plans to timetable classes that could be shared by two teachers was one initiative that might counteract the specialization of the curriculum, which also seemed to contribute to the isolation of teachers.

Ulterior motives. The teachers interviewed ranged in their opinions of the worth of the evaluation process from useless and a waste of time, through helpful in general, but not in particular, to a positive experience. But even these opinions do not reflect the diversity of motives that were also present among teachers. Even those teachers who had been teaching for many years talked about the loss of face involved in not putting on a good show for the administrator. They thought that their own good standing with the administrator, their director supervisor, might be jeopardized by such an event. Teachers were pleased that administrators spoke positively of them, but then felt that they had to demonstrate that competence in order to remain in good standing. So despite the principal's assertion that teacher evaluation was an opportunity to have someone else help you improve your teaching, some teachers saw it as a carefully organized attempt to ensure that they were competent. The fragile nature of the process was reflected in their comments that their own evaluations were very fair but that the system could be easily abused.

Final Comments

The policy on teacher evaluation has been implemented in All Saints Catholic School District since 1985. The procedures are written in such a way that there are opportunities for individual principals to shape them to the demands of the school, and this has happened at the three schools in this case study. Although each school is unique in aspects of the process, teachers' recollections of evaluation went beyond their experiences in these schools and this school district. From a review of the cases, some themes emerge that reflect teacher evaluation in All Saints.

1. The differences in the process of evaluation seemed to reflect the school culture as it related to the particular grade level of the students. In the elementary school, with the focus on child learning and development and where socialization to working independently and cooperatively were also goals, the administration spent much of their time in classrooms and hallways. Teachers were encouraged to use all the spaces of the school, so that teaching was visible and administrators and parents could always participate. In the junior high school, with an emphasis on adolescence and increasing responsibility for learning, the principal and teachers talked frequently about students and their learning needs. The diversity in the onset of maturity meant that the monitoring function was shared with teachers, so that principals frequently popped into classrooms to keep contact with students and see how things were going. Regardless of their particular teaching subjects, teachers shared information about student behavior on a regular basis. In the high school, the focus is on academic achievement, and student affairs tend to be mainly concerned with attendance and marks. Teachers as specialists focus on student learning that is integrated from year to year to enhance students' success. Discussions with administrators tend to be about particular students.

Information about life in classrooms more often comes through third parties because administrators spend less time in classes.

2. Evident throughout the cases is the importance of the teacher's attitude toward administration. Where trust was high, teachers talked about the benefits of the experience and their ownership of it. The importance of the quality of the relationship between administrator and teacher remains central to the evaluation process. Where a sense of trust and integrity was present, teachers were more willing to risk displaying classroom processes that needed improvement in order to obtain help; where these characterisitics were absent for one of the partners, a contrived evaluation process ensued that proved unsatisfactory to both parties.
3. Where teachers viewed evaluation as the major stimulus for professional development, they tended to view it as potentially punitive and were unable to identify many initiatives they had undertaken toward their own professional development. Where professional development was a part of the school culture and teachers were encouraged and expected to share ideas and cooperate on curriculum, then teacher evaluation was just one more way to enhance teaching.
4. The amount of informal interaction between principal and teacher, especially in the classroom setting, was another theme that arose from the teachers' experiences. Where there was more interaction and more information about the expectations of the administration and where these were part of a school philosophy, there was less apprehension about being observed. In the elementary school where the administrators spent much of their time popping in and out of classes, offering advice and assistance, formal classroom visits seemed superfluous unless they were to help the teacher work on a specific problem. In the junior high school, with its partial specialization and emphasis on student-teacher interaction, and where the principal and his assistants made a point of being in classrooms as part of their everyday work, the compressed in time but continuous observations seemed best to capture the hectic nature of classroom life. In the high school with its tradition of specializations reinforced through the department system and where the major focus of the administration was student affairs, teacher evaluation involved two or three observations over the course of a year. Students, parents, and the everyday conversations of school life provided sufficient information about classrooms. Administrators, unless they were specialists, were seen as less able to provide the kind of feedback necessary for teacher growth.
5. The issue of the specific specialization of the evaluator became more important with increases in grade levels. Although elementary teachers also preferred working with evaluators who were able to coach and guide in specific subjects, this point was clearest at the high school level. In some ways it was its presence at the elementary level that helped transform evaluation into development. Emphasis on generic teaching skills seemed to place the focus on the teacher rather than on student learning, a concern for teachers across all grade levels.
6. Central office administrators were only peripherally involved in evaluation; they sent out the initial lists and talked with the principal about who was to be evaluated, and they read the reports when they were sent in to central office. Yet they were also involved because the centralized nature of funding in the district meant that they controlled the purse strings for substitute teachers who were necessary if teachers were to have opportunities to visit colleagues during the teaching day. The alternative was to have that class taken by the administration or another teacher, all of whom had already full schedules.
7. The issue of the rating scale is one about which many teachers and administrators are skeptical. The difficulty of interrater reliability both within and among schools, and the inevitable negotiation of these criteria with teachers was a potential minefield for many. Teachers wondered about the impact of disagreeing too strongly with the administrator, and administrators wondered about being too harsh in their assessments.
8. The contrived nature of classroom observations in many instances meant that the everyday life of the classroom often remained hidden. For some it was the artificiality of the "dog-and-pony" show or the demonstration of a teaching style considered to be preferred by the evaluator. For others it was their own lack of comfort with having another person watch them teach. And for yet others it was in response to a need by the administrator for information necessary to complete the evalutation report. It introduced a formality that was absent from the principal's daily visits.

Chapter 11

A Case Study of Bloomsville School Division

The Bloomsville School Division, a mid-sized jurisdiction, is a combination of small suburban centers and numerous small farming communities.

Teacher Evaluation Policy

Inherent in the philosophy of the Bloomsville Teacher Evaluation Policy is the idea that through ongoing teacher evaluation processes teachers will be more effective in their teaching practices and thereby provide effective instruction to students. The policy also explicitly states that teacher evaluation will assist in the professional growth of teachers.

In reviewing the statement of purpose and the operational guidelines of the policy, it is apparent that although teacher growth is implicit in the policy and addressed through words such as "encouraging self improvement, developing inservice, providing assistance, and providing positive reinforcement," the real focus of the policy is on monitoring teacher performance (practice) for the purposes of accountability to the board's legal responsibilities with regard to contractual matters, fair personnel decision making and matters of teacher certification. In addition, the policy attempts to make explicit the responsibilities and expectations of effective teachers. In this way the policy serves as a guideline for the evaluation process and provides consistency in the writing of evaluation reports.

The following is a summary of the teacher performance criteria:

1. Preparation for Teaching
2. Presentation of Learning Activities
3. Learning Process
4. Classroom Management
5. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
6. Characteristics

The evaluation policy explicitly outlines the roles and responsibilities of principals, assistant principals, and assistant superintendents. Principals are the primary evaluators and are expected to be educational leaders in their schools. They are responsible for evaluating the instructional programs and process in order to achieve 10 goals. The majority (6) of these goals relate to legal responsibilities of the Board with regard to contractual matters or teacher certification, identifying, monitoring, and assisting teachers whose effectiveness is in question, and assisting and monitoring teachers new to the system or who are beginning their careers. Two goals relate to teacher growth issues through evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in teaching technique or classroom management, and the identification of specific interests and competencies among staff members. Two more goals deal with improvement and continuation of high standards of performance and quality instruction.

Although the Assistant Superintendent's role in the formal evaluation has as one component assisting teachers with self-improvement activities, the majority of this person's responsibility is related to the legal responsibilities of ensuring that Alberta Education curriculum and related program requirements are being met, along with the expectations of the school division. As well, the assistant superintendent's role is to assist the superintendent in decisions regarding tenure, termination, and suspensions.

Another key responsibility of central administrators is to identify and deal with potential staff problems as soon as possible. Hence, in interpreting the underlying philosophy of the policy, which is to "ensure the provision of effective instruction of students," and in view of the expressed roles and responsibilities of the central administration, the policy intent that becomes most apparent is that through teacher evaluation the Board will be able to identify and eliminate incompetent or unprofessional teachers from the classroom. As written, the focus of the policy is more on discharging the legal responsibilities of the Board than on teacher growth.

Perceived Purpose: Area Superintendents

In general, the area superintendents felt that their evaluation policy was well defined with clear procedures for implementing the policy and explicit expectations, that is, performance criteria, for teachers. They felt that the official intent of the policy was to monitor the quality of classroom instruction, the implementation of the prescribed curriculum, and board goals and objectives; and second, to have greater accountability to Alberta Education, the board, and parents. The aims of teacher growth were viewed as being contingent upon the time, skills, and perceptions of the local level evaluator, usually the principal.

In discussing teacher growth and how it is reflected in the board policy one area superintendent commented,

> I think a lot of the flowery language in which the policy is couched tells me very little about how teachers grow and how they change their behaviors, how they look at data and begin to wonder about their operation. These kinds of issues I don't think are met in this evaluation policy.

The perceived intent of the Bloomsville teacher evaluation policy can be best summarized by the following statement by a superintendent:

> Our policy tries to be all things to all people. It's a political instrument, a bureaucratic instrument, and a sorting instrument.

Implementation

The central concern shared by the area superintendents was that because principals were now responsible for conducting teacher evaluations in their schools, they should be adequately trained as evaluators and feel comfortable conducting teacher evaluations. Area superintendents were of the opinion that some principals viewed their responsibility as "having to do the dirty work which was originally done by the central office," while other principals viewed it as "a time-consuming formality," and this was reflected in the quality of the evaluation reports.

Training evaluators. Central administration has spent the last four to five years training principals to become competent evaluators and to feel comfortable spending more time in the classroom. Their goals are to encourage principals to become instructional leaders as well as good organizers and managers. They have attempted to do this through their own involvement in the evaluation of principals. The procedure that they use is based on the Reflective Practice model in which the area superintendents coach principals to engage in conversations about their work and to reflect on and improve their own practice. They also try to demonstrate what a meaningful evaluation report looks like through writing up their evaluation of the principal.

Writing evaluation reports. Too often central administrators have found teacher evaluation reports to be superficial, not completed on time, and filled with generic computer generated statements. In reaction to these poor quality reports the superintendents have returned unacceptable reports with a memo regarding the weakness in the report. In some cases they worked directly with particular principals to assist them in "observing teachers, developing a plan of action for teachers experiencing difficulty, and in report writing."

In order for the evaluation reports to be of use in personnel decision making or in matters related to contractual or certification matters, the reports needed to be detailed with specific instances of what the evaluator saw happening. Because the report involves professional judgment, central office wanted principals to substantiate in some detail how they came to a particular decision or observation. Central office developed three forms to help administrators gather evaluation data and structure their final reports. The first form comprises essentially six pages of check lists and is entitled *Instructional Supervision: Classroom Responsibilities*. In the document classroom responsibilities are divided into six categories, and under each category are anywhere from six to 20 points (indicators) to check off to determine how well the teacher is fulfilling that particular dimension of instructional supervision. These categories include: preparation and planning (e.g., follows curriculum, follows timetable, unit and lesson plans, reference material); classroom management (e.g., atmosphere, physical environment, use of time, routines, clear expectations); teaching process (skills and strategies), the learning process and evaluation (e.g., involves students in learning, keeps students on task, opportunity for students to make choices, keeps file of student's work, complete records of student progress); personal qualities (e.g., attitude, appearance, respect, responsibility); other strengths and attributes (participates in inservice training, teacher organizations and committees, promotes school activities and morale, concern and interest for general welfare of the school).

The second data collection form is designed to be used by the evaluator during preconference sessions with teachers. The form is to be completed by the teacher prior to the evaluation and is designed to assist the teacher in preparing for the evaluation and to provide the necessary background information for the evaluator to make sense of the lesson he or she will be observing. The one-page form asks the teacher to respond to seven questions. They include information regarding where (unit, lesson, page number, and text) the teacher is in the course; the teaching activities that will be observed in the lesson; what they expect the students to get out of the lesson; methods to be used to deliver the lesson; particular teaching behaviors they want monitored; how they are going to know if the students have learned; and special characteristics of students that ought to be noted.

The final form is the actual teacher evaluation report. It is a standard form to be used for teachers seeking continuing contracts or permanent certification, and for teachers on a temporary or part-time contract. The one-page form asks the evaluator to comment on six dimensions of the teacher's performance. They include preparation for teaching, classroom management, teaching process, learning process, and personal qualities. There is a section for the evaluator to make general comments and recommendations, and five lines for the teacher to comment on the report.

Through better written and more meaningful evaluation reports central office hopes that teacher evaluation will not be perceived as "something to be feared," or "something that is *done* to teachers." Rather it will be viewed as "something that belongs to teachers, that helps them to grow professionally and must, therefore, be explained and justified by the evaluator."

Implementation at the School Level: Navan Elementary-Junior High School

Context

Well-established in a rural community, Navan elementary-junior high school remains open because of its symbolic and historical significance. The current administration comprises two new administrators, a woman principal in her second year of administration, and a young man in his first year as vice-principal.

School Climate: Researchers' Perspective

The school atmosphere apparent to a newcomer is one of happiness and cooperation. The researchers were greeted by children as they entered the school. The children were busy doing "work jobs" in various places in the school. They responded happily to greetings, as did the secretary. The principal greeted the researchers and welcomed them to do whatever they were there to do. Teachers were meeting and greeting each other in the staff room and the talk centered around a number of curriculum matters.

The friendly, caring atmosphere in the school was accentuated when a tearful small boy came to the secretary's desk with a problem to be solved. He said, "I can't take the newt on the bus you know, and I am allowed to baby-sit it over the holiday." The secretary reassured him that there would be a solution before the day ended and she began the process by calling to get someone to drive the youngster and the newt home for the holiday.

Administrative Philosophy

At Navan School the major obstacle for administration in conducting teacher evaluations is that there is little opportunity for innovative approaches to evaluation (such as peer coaching) because of timetabling constraints, work load, and the reality that there is seldom more than one subject area expert. Because of these obstacles the principal and vice-principal are responsible for conducting the evaluations.

The administration believe that the teachers would be interested in alternative approaches to teacher evaluation and are concerned that many teachers on staff view the evaluation process as distinct from teacher professional development. They attribute this in part to the school division policy of designating two afternoons each month for professional development activities. Some of these activities are school-based while others take place at central office and are usually related to a particular division theme (e.g., program continuity). These afternoons also provide the opportunity for subject area teachers located at the various rural schools in the division to meet and exchange ideas.

One of the central goals of the administration is to create a "sharing, cooperative work environment," and this goal is reflected in the practice of teacher evaluation. The administration views the purpose of teacher evaluation as a means to "indicate to teachers their progress and to reward or recognize their achievements, to keep them accountable for their actions, and to help them to grow professionally."

The administration views summative and formative evaluation as being part of a single process. Therefore, they encourage an open-door policy in the school where teachers feel comfortable having administration drop into their classrooms, so that the administrators have the opportunity to get to know the teachers, the students, and what is going on in the classrooms. "Dropping in is a priority with us," commented the Assistant Principal. "We want to make sure that we know our colleagues before we do a formal evaluation. We want to be sure they are comfortable with us being in their classrooms."

In conducting both formal and informal evaluations the administration identify three interrelated areas of importance. First and foremost they expect teachers to be role models for the children and for the community. They are sensitive to how teachers interact with their colleagues, students, and parents (rapport and personality); what they say about their private life, work, colleagues, and students (attitude); and their contribution to the school.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process at Navan involves both formal and informal evaluation techniques.

Informal Evaluation

The informal evaluation process is ongoing. The principal and vice-principal collect data through general observation of teachers in various situations throughout the year; through dropping into classes; through what students, parents, and other teachers say about particular teachers; and through conversations with teachers. One veteran teacher commented,

> she [principal] comes in unannounced, usually for five minutes at a time—but that's the way I prefer it ... I am curious to know how I am perceived by her and if I'm in line with her expectations.

Another teacher who supported frequent unannounced visits from administration stated,

> If a teacher can't or shouldn't be in a classroom, they shouldn't be there! I don't think that avoiding evaluation just to protect them is the way to go.

A physical education teacher in her second year of teaching also supported administrators dropping into her class. She explained,

> In a way you'd like to know when they [evaluators] are coming, but for me the best thing would be to come in unannounced. Because then they're going to see what's *really* going on in a normal day instead of when I'm more "up there." Most of us don't teach "way up there" every day!

The principal keeps working notes of her observations so that she can acknowledge teachers' accomplishments either formally (in writing) or informally (through conversation), discuss potential problems, or make suggestions for improvement. The informal evaluation helps the administration to get to know the teachers and to identify strengths and potential problems before conducting the formal evaluation.

A physical education teacher reflecting on his experiences with informal evaluations made the following comment:

> It's the little things. You know, the odd note in your mailbox saying "Thanks for putting in all the time," that builds respect for your administrator, and if you respect her, then you listen to her.

Collegiality. A teacher who had been at the school for many years views informal evaluation as the feedback she receives from her colleagues:

> In the years I've been here much of our evaluation has been of an informal nature. There's frequently open discussion with the principal or another teacher about "Such and such happened, what could I have done? What should I have done? and why did that sort of thing happen?" I don't think we even perceive that kind of discussion as being evaluation, but we're receiving valuable feedback at the same time ... We come away from that type of conversation with a new point of view and often strategies to try, which is the whole point of evaluation. But it's not formal. Nothing is actually written down.

She also felt that informal evaluation occurs in giving advice and discussing her work with beginning teachers:

> I give advice and I'll receive advice from administration, from kids, and from the people with whom I work. A number of new teachers come every year—they are young and new to the school and they are interested in "What should I do? How does this happen? What could I do?" So I provide advice and they give back to me things that worked for them. So it makes me think and talk about what I do.

Although teachers in this school reported that there were few opportunities for teachers to observe their peers, they did appreciate the few incidents that occurred. A first-year teacher mentioned that another teacher had commented favorably on what she had seen in his class. This note from a colleague encouraged him to continue in his efforts to work with this particular methodology.

On several occasions, teachers in this school talked about the desirability of teachers observing each other. One teacher stated that she would like to have other teachers see her teach, even if only for 10 minutes at a time, and have them give her feedback. On several other occasions, teachers spoke of peer evaluation programs being used in nearby schools and wished that a similar system could be implemented in their school. These remarks were not made out of dissatisfaction with the evaluation work conducted by their present administration, but out of a strong desire to work collegially with their peers.

Self-evaluation. A number of experienced teachers engaged in ongoing informal evaluations of their own teaching. The most frequently cited method of this form of evaluation was to review students' achievement on quizzes and tests. One health science teacher commented:

> The ultimate evaluation comes down to the exam. That tells me if I'm doing a good job. If the class average is low then I realize they're missing the points, so I turn around and reteach it.

He went on to explain how he reacted to the class average of 53% on the last exam:

> If I see a mistake I take responsibility for it. I say to the kids "Fifty percent has got to be yours because you are studying this, and fifty percent maybe I can teach this in a different way." ... I was disappointed in myself for not realizing they weren't catching on sooner. It tells me "Hey, you better do more assignments, you better do more homework check, you'd better ask more questions in class."

Another senior teacher commented on how he evaluated his teaching:

> In my opinion, if the teacher is doing a good job the kids want to be there, they enjoy being in the classroom, and they are challenged. You can have perfectly written lesson plans, but what am I actually delivering? When I teach my classes I want to hear "What are we doing today? We're doing this—all right!" I want to hear those kinds of feelings right from the lowest kid all the way up. That's the way I look at it.

Teachers also use less formal methods of self evaluation. A primary division teacher allows student performance, which she assesses informally, to guide her teaching.

> It is more how each individual lesson goes like yesterday I felt that one of my lessons didn't, you know, the outcome wasn't what I wanted. So I actually did the lesson today and thought I did a better job.

She went on to say that if the students are not progressing as quickly as she thinks they should, she changes her teaching. In her words, "it's a lot of daily changes."

Ubiquity of teacher evaluation. A teacher with seven years of teaching experience felt that formal evaluations were really nothing more than the formalization of the evaluator's ongoing informal observations and impressions. He commented,

> It's [teacher evaluation] a little bit phoney. I mean, there's a lot of evaluations of teachers, but it's not formal. I don't know how you formalize it, but principals get evaluations on teachers all of the time. If they get phone calls from parents they know the teacher is in trouble. They hear about what's going on in the classroom and if there are problems—so they know. In many cases they don't have to come into the classroom. It's [formal evaluation] phoney because they might say, "Well what class would you like me to sit in on?" So you devise a *special* class and usually the kids are a little bit different when someone is in there.

Formal Evaluation

Generally, formal evaluations are conducted in response to a list of names generated by division office identifying those teachers on staff who are due for evaluation. The list includes three categories of teachers: those seeking permanent certification, those with continuing contracts (formally evaluated every three years), and those on a temporary, part-time, or probationary contract.

Preconference. At Navan the formal evaluation process involves two classroom observations in which data are collected for a final written report. There is no preconference; however, the formal classroom visits are prearranged with the teacher. A number of teachers commented on how they felt about not having an opportunity to preconference with their evaluator.

> At the first of the year we were given our little information binders and in it is the principal's philosophy. So I know in the evaluation what she's going to be looking for.

Another teacher commented,

> I didn't know what to expect from this principal in terms of what she was going to focus on in the evaluation. During our postconference I realized that what I was focusing on was way out in left field from what she was focusing on.

A teacher with 10 years teaching experience did not feel preconferencing was necessary. He explained,

> I think every teacher has read in a book what you should be doing in a classroom, so you have an idea of what the evaluator is looking for. You know—the introduction, how were the kids? Were they paying attention? Whether you wrap up the class, all that sort of stuff. You are aware that there is a certain supposedly "good structure" for a class and I think most teachers try to adapt their class to fit that structure.

A second-year teacher did not see a need for preconferencing because she felt she had sufficient input into what was to be evaluated and in what went into the final report:

> She talks the evaluation over with me before it is written up. I have a great deal of input both in what I prepare for observation and what is written in the final report. I don't need a preconference. It's not necessary. The choice of subject is mine.

A teacher in his second year of teaching viewed his experience with preconferencing in the following way:

> To me the preconference was the administrator putting to me to self-evaluate myself, and to identify my own weakness. This was hard to do if you have nothing to base it on. Luckily I had an excellent administrator in my student teaching who was into evaluation. Together we watched Madeline Hunter video tapes over and over again.

Improving practice: Postconference. The formal evaluation usually involves the principal or vice-principal sitting somewhere (usually at the back) in the classroom and recording everything they see going on. Based on these observations they then develop questions to be used in the postconference that will help the teacher being evaluated to reflect on what took place during the observation period. The evaluators write up a preliminary report that is discussed with the teacher in the postconference and is then sent to central office. A teacher on a first-year contract discusses his experience of being evaluated:

> I have had two formal evaluations this year. After I get a copy of the principal's findings we meet to go over the details. She made a number of suggestions, but pointing out that I can either adopt them or not. It was a very positive experience. It was very relaxed. She knows us well before she comes in formally. When she comes in I know her and she knows me. She is no stranger.... I don't care much about a preconference. The postconference is everything. I want to know what's up with my teaching. I want suggestions.

A second-year teacher explained that she looked forward to her evaluations because of the suggestions she receives and the opportunity to try them out to see if they fit her teaching style.

> I look forward to evaluation. The administrators have more experience than I have so they have suggestions to offer. They may see things that I don't. I have tried different things in my classroom that they suggested.

Another teacher commented on his experience with being evaluated:

> Based on my experience evaluation is to find your weak points and to improve on them, and I liked that. Sometimes you don't know what your weak points are. Once you are aware of them then you can improve.

The vice-principal comments on his experience of being evaluated by the superintendent and the school principal.

> I like evaluation because it makes me feel competent. I am part of the admin. team and we set our goals together. I felt no pressure being evaluated in a new position. The principal shared her own evaluation, which was done by the superintendent, with me. Evaluation has not changed my work life but it clarified the goals I am still working on.

However, he felt that his evaluation would be more meaningful if he received more feedback on how he was perceived by the teachers and the community. He explained:

> Although I teach I was only evaluated as an administrator. It is assumed that I am a master teacher. Maybe that is a weakness of the system. The principal has seen me teach, but not in an evaluative sense. No teachers or parents had input into my evaluation, and I'd like that. It seems like I have been left to establish myself. The evaluation system in our division is hierarchical and I'd like to see it flattened a bit more.

A number of teachers talked specifically about how the evaluation process helped them to improve their teaching in the classroom. A teacher with five years of experience commented:

> She'd [principal] ask me questions to help me to think about what I was doing and why. She'd then point out some other things that I hadn't thought about. She'd kind of give me ideas to work on here, then she'd follow up by asking me "have you been doing this or that?" I could have lied if I wanted and just said "yes," but again, this is a small staff and I respect her, so yeah, I'd try what she suggested ... She was trying to get me to be more rounded. She'd suggest using more varied ways of getting the message across. "Don't settle for just lecture and expect kids to know it. Bring in something, use media, use whatever," she'd say.

A teacher on a first-year contract commented that

> I learned from her [principal] that I leave some children out when I am asking them questions. Since then I spread the questions around. This is really important to me. I don't like to leave kids out.

Positive reinforcement. A number of teachers viewed the evaluation process as a way to determine if they were meeting the principal's expectations, to identify areas of their teaching that needed improvement, and as positive reinforcement for what they were doing in the classroom. A teacher new to the school explained:

> Based on my experience, formal evaluation gave me positive reinforcement because I wasn't sure if I was doing the right thing or if I was on the right track. I was just going about in my own little world and doing my thing and there was no reinforcement of what I was doing.

Another teacher commented on his evaluation experience,

> Oh, yeah, it was a great vote of confidence. You know, "You're going in the right direction. Keep it up." That's important.

Validity of Evaluation Process

Rapport with Evaluator. Not all teachers saw the evaluation process as a valid assessment of their teaching. One of the key factors in determining the validity of an evaluation report and whether it would have an impact on a teacher's teaching practice related to his or her relationship with the evaluator. A teacher with 14 years of teaching experience commented on her past evaluation experience:

> Evaluations can be positive or negative in terms of assessing if you are doing a good job and if you are keeping on track. If you don't get along with the person evaluating you, and you get the feeling that they don't like you either, then all of a sudden you get this evaluation report with all of these negative things about you—it's unfair.... I sat down with this person because I wanted to know why I was being evaluated this way. It was completely negative. She told me to go back and take a few courses. I changed schools because I just couldn't get along with her. I didn't think her assessment was valid—It just didn't ring true.

Another teacher commented,

> If you have good rapport with your leader then you are going to look at the evaluation report as constructive criticism, or ways to help you. But if you don't get along with the person then you'll see it as a destructive thing.

A teacher on a temporary contract commented that the principal

> avoids relationship problems that may arise from evaluation by knowing us before she does a formal evaluation.

In discussing the importance of rapport between the teacher and evaluator a second year teacher stated:

> I have a great deal of input into my evaluation, and I would not stay in the school if I had poor rapport with the principal. Having a voice is really important to me.

Good teaching: Consensus. Many teachers discussed the significance of the need for agreement between what the evaluator perceives to constitute good teaching and what the teacher being evaluated perceives to be good teaching. Consequently, specific recommendations for improvement are more likely to be positively received by the teachers when they see their values regarding teaching reflected or confirmed in the evaluation. A second-year teacher commented,

> My evaluation touched on my perception of good teaching. She [principal] and I think that the same things are important about teaching. Being evaluated on criteria other than what I think is important would not be a good experience.

When teaching in a relatively isolated rural school with a small staff, it is essential for a positive working relationship that teachers and administrators are on the same wavelength.

> We work out here in the middle of somebody's old pasture and it's essential that we all get along. There is no other way it can be; otherwise it's not good for us, and it's not good for the kids. Many of these people I've worked with for a long time so a lot of what we agree upon is done among us without any need [intervention] from the outside. We pretty much have the same view of kids and what we wish to accomplish. The same idea of what discipline should be about, what toeing the line should be, and what we are going to accept in terms of homework, neatness, and so on. Much of this is decided informally among teachers and is shared by administration.

Another teacher who has been at the school for two years commented,

> We are a small staff and we all get along together. There is a lot of camaraderie here. We share our evaluations with each other. The evaluations appear to touch on our perceptions of good teaching and that's important because it affects parents and kids.

The comment by a teacher new to the school elaborates on the significance of this camaraderie and its impact on creating a positive evaluation environment:

> Teacher morale has an impact on kids. Kids can feel it when people are unhappy; therefore, staff self-esteem is very important. I think that it affects parents in that their kids are happy coming to school here. A positive evaluation environment affects everyone who has anything to do with the school.

However, not all teachers in the school are comfortable with their current knowledge of what the principal considers to be good teaching. A new teacher comments:

> We don't know the criteria for "good performance" for a permanent contract. Sometimes I guess about what [the principal] wants and I could be guessing incorrectly.

Subject area expertise. For evaluation reports to be meaningful and valid numerous teachers talked about the need to have more than one person assess their performance, and in some cases to have a subject area specialist do the evaluation. Implicit in their discussion was their belief that teacher evaluation was primarily for professional accountability. However, professional accountability for an experienced teacher related more to pedagogical concerns, so requiring subject area expertise and professional accountability for beginning teachers related more to classroom management concerns. The following comments reflect their experiences and sentiments. An experienced elementary teacher explains:

> When you have only one person evaluating you, you have only one opinion of how you are teaching. If that person doesn't like your style you are going to get a negative report.

A science teacher with 10 years of experience at the junior high level comments:

> I find that the further away people who evaluate you are from students and the classroom experience, the more interested they are in their own ideology, or what they learned doing their master's degree. Like, they've approached education in a certain way and if you don't meet that particular slant on things, then you're lacking. That's always sort of insulted me.

For teacher evaluations to be truly effective a language arts teacher explains why evaluators ought to have some subject area expertise:

> The evaluator ought to be a master teacher to be truly effective. You're going to take with a very large grain of salt advice given by someone who's not in your field. A person who has chosen to remain a teacher in a particular subject area and has maintained interest in their field through professional development is pretty knowledgeable about what they're doing. In which case, they're unlikely to accept blanket advice from someone that wouldn't know the language arts curriculum if it hit them.

Another teacher supported this perspective in her comment:

> The evaluation that is intended to bring about change in the way a subject area teacher presents a subject, I would like to see presented by somebody who is in the field and who has that knowledge.

She felt that there was a place for evaluators without subject area expertise, but only for evaluations related to classroom management, climate, and relationships among colleagues and with students.

> When I taught elementary I was evaluated by a man who was high school trained in phys.ed., which is probably about as far away as you can get. But he never pretended to know about elementary school and what I should be doing in that regard. He was always very interested and asked a lot of "why?" questions which helped me to think about what I was doing.

Finally, a teacher who had been teaching physical education for the past eight years and is now teaching junior high science comments on why he would like his evaluator to be familiar with the school context rather than being a subject area expert. He explains:

> I want my principal to evaluate me or someone who knows the situation. If I want to move on in science to be, say, a biology teacher at a high school, then I'd actually want to have a science person do an evaluation of what I'm doing and where I could go. But if I'm just happy here and want to improve my teaching situation here, then I want to know that the evaluator is familiar with my situation... For example, I taught phys. ed for eight years and then suddenly I'm teaching science. No, I don't want a science person to come in and see how I'm doing.

Evaluations as one-shot deals. The majority of teachers interviewed felt that teacher evaluations are more meaningful and have more impact on what they did in the classroom when they are more frequent and take into consideration their total teaching assignment as well as their extracurricular involvement. A teacher comments on the kind of evaluations that involves the evaluator sitting at the back of the room for one or two classes in the year, and then bases the whole evaluation report on those brief visits.

> Evaluations have to be in-depth enough or frequent enough to have an effect on teaching. Evaluations tend to be tune-ups. They come in to have a quick look to see if everything is working fine. If its not broken you don't fix it, thank you very much, see you later!

Another teacher comments on the reality that her evaluation reports have not been in-depth or frequent enough to have much impact on her teaching. "Not only should evaluations be more frequent," exclaims one teacher, "but they should also be more stringent." He explains:

> I would like to see more involvement from central office people, particularly in dealing with problem teachers and new teachers. They [central office administration] have to be with it and have to understand what's going on. And you can't do that by coming in once.

Reflecting on his own evaluation experience he commented,

> Nobody has gone through my books—all they want is to see your one lesson plan, not what you've been doing for the past four months. I would like to see evaluations done weekly where the principal says, "Okay, let me see what you've done this week" and then just skim through your lesson plans. Then the principal will understand what you are doing and if an administrator comes in from central office they can also check them [planning books].

What mitigates the shortcomings of the one-shot visit in this school is the fact that the principal is a frequent visitor to the classes. She pops in for short visits and leaves teachers notes on what she sees. These notes are invariably of a positive nature. Thus when she does engage in formal evaluation, she has seen the class in a variety of states. Several teachers spoke of the impact of her assessments on their teaching. These changes appear to be the result of continued assessment and supervision. One teacher states:

> The evaluation program this year is a continuation of last year's. Objectives for improvement that were set [as a result of last year's evaluation] included the preparation of more detailed plans.
>
> This created more work for me, but it has helped me, I feel more prepared ... I am more confident, more organized. It helps students too.

This teacher indicated that during the fall term the principal followed up on the objectives set as a result of last year's assessment and found considerable improvement.

Other reports from teachers indicate that the distinctions between supervision and assessment are blurred. A teacher at the beginning of her career mentioned that when the principal dropped in for a "pop in" visit, she noted that some students were not fully engaged while the teacher was talking to the students. The principal made suggestions that the teacher adopted with positive results.

While teachers talk about the need for more in-depth evaluation procedures that include frequent unannounced visits, this process appears to be targeted at weeding out the weaker teachers. A teacher in his fifth year of teaching comments:

> For me the purpose of evaluation if to find out the weaker teachers, and that's where I have a little bit of a pet peeve. It's because I feel that too many people are in the profession who shouldn't be in it, and it shows, because when a weak teacher comes, it makes my job harder.

He goes onto explain that his job is made harder because when his students come from a class conducted by a weaker teacher he must then spend the first 10 minutes of his class "being the disciplinarian" getting his students focused and on task:

> You know, I find when you're covering for a weak person the kids know it right away. That makes my job tougher, I guess, and that bothers me. When these people get in. And that's kind of what I see is lacking in teacher evaluation. More people are getting through the cracks.

Some of the teachers interviewed resented the amount of administrative time that had to be devoted to evaluating new and problem teachers, which left little time for administrators to work with the experienced teachers on their professional growth. The administrators acknowledge this problem, but attribute it to the division teacher evaluation ethos, which focuses on working with beginning teachers to nip problems in the bud.

Impact on teaching. The most frequent response to the question of how teacher evaluation influences or affects teaching in the classroom, is that it gives teachers the opportunity to "have a look at what [they] do from somebody else's point of view." A teacher explains,

> I like the chance to look around and see what they're seeing, and all of a sudden I'm looking at things I do and the things I say... I'm made aware again of the things that a teacher should always keep in mind, but doesn't.

Another teacher adds,

> I'm far more likely to take a look at myself if I know someone else is going to come in ... I guess when you entertain and you invite people to your home, you make sure everything is beautifully cleaned up and so you do the same thing when an evaluator is coming. You look at your whole day and your whole teaching style and your room and everything that you do. And I think that's very valu-

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> able because it's difficult to do it to yourself. It's pretty easy just to let yourself slide sometimes.

What appears to be most critical to teachers who are interested in professional growth is that evaluations include some kind of followup. "It's fine to evaluate teachers not having problems," exclaims one veteran teacher,

> but the evaluation process really falls short of helping teachers to deal with their problems. It remains more of a criticism. The evaluator may recommend what the teacher should work on, but if they don't give them the means or ways of improving, or if they don't actually get in there and help them, then there likely will be little real change in the classroom.

Teachers often talked about the relationship between teacher evaluation and its confirmation of their status as professionals. A first-year teacher explains:

> The evaluation process makes you look at yourself more as a professional. The public doesn't think we are real professionals, but having an evaluation like you do in business raises our rank. Getting a good evaluation makes you feel good about yourself. It makes you feel more professional.

Another teacher comments:

> It is certainly nice to have files that say that you are a professional. Files that say you are doing a good job impacts the way I feel about myself. It certainly has an impact on career decisions.

Conclusions

Evaluation Ethos

The apparent metaphor that guides the evaluation practices of the division of Bloomsville is "teaching as technical expertise" (Wise et al., 1985). This is evident in the language of the teacher evaluation policy, which focuses on discharging the legal responsibilities of the board through ongoing teacher evaluation based on 74 indicators of effective teaching. Instructional improvement is clearly secondary in the goals of teacher evaluation and occurs through the identification of the strengths and weakness in teaching technique and classroom management. The underlying philosophy of the policy is to "ensure the provision of effective instruction of students" through the early detection of problems or weakness in teaching and the elimination of incompetent or unprofessional teachers in the classroom.

The comment from an area superintendent captures the evaluation ethos in the division:

> We try to get principals out to see teachers early on to ensure they are on track. We are fussy about who we give tenure, so we want good detailed reports from principals identifying their [teachers] strengths and weaknesses so we can feel comfortable and confident we've made the right decision.

The evaluation practices at Navan School appear to reflect concepts of "teaching as professional judgment" in that the administrative team is attempting to encourage an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration in the working environment of the school. Some teachers and administrators share their evaluation reports with colleagues, so there is a sense of cooperation and openness. Teachers talked about how they reflected on and changed their practice through informal problem solving discussions with administrators and teachers. They also discussed how student achievement on examinations affected their personal assessment of their teaching. Working with beginning and student teachers helped some teachers to review their classroom practice and to reflect on how and why they did things in a particular way. The teacher evaluation postconference was also viewed by teachers as an opportunity to talk about their classroom practice and to explain why they did things in a certain way, or to review with a different set of lenses a particular incident that occurred in classroom.

The evaluation process at Navan is congruent with the division evaluation ethos in that it is still essentially hierarchical. The principal and vice-principal conduct the evaluation, and the teacher has relatively little input into what is being evaluated. Teachers do, however, have an opportunity to influence through discussion the final evaluation report.

Congruence

In general teachers wanted to be evaluated and felt that as professionals they were obligated to undergo evaluation by a person in authority. At Navan they talked about the congruence between what they and their administrators viewed to be significant indicators of effective teaching. This congruence in expectations gave the evaluation credibility and rendered the recommendations more meaningful.

There appeared to be consistency between the division evaluation ethos and the school level evaluation ethos in the belief that the purpose of evaluation is for professional accountability. The experienced teachers, however, were resentful with regard to the amount of administrative time that was devoted to monitoring and evaluating beginning and at-risk teachers, which left less time for the administrators to work with them on professional development. Although they shared the view that it is necessary to work with teachers before they receive permanent certification or a permanent contract (an early intervention approach), they also appeared to want another kind of evaluation process for experienced teachers.

Implementation at the School Level: Belleville High School

At Belleville High School, a mid-sized, community-based secondary school, members of the research team are greeted cordially and politely by the administrators and the office staff. At an early visit to the school, we are introduced at a staff meeting, and we explain the purposes of our study. The staff is cautious and question us on our purposes and methods but in the end vote to give us approval to conduct the study. On tours through the school, we are introduced to individual teachers as we are given a quick glimpse of the school facilities. The administrator points out the crowded conditions and various needs for repair and improvement.

The Principal

The principal is an experienced educator with service in several jurisdictions within the Province and wide administrative experience generally. He cares deeply about his school and has taken steps to improve both the facilities available to the school in general and the level of school spirit, mainly by his attention to athletic activities.

He explains that he spends a great deal of time on the teacher evaluation process in his school. He describes a complete evaluation process that includes at least three classroom visits for each teacher to be evaluated, meetings with teachers, and the preparation of reports. He states that he is fully implementing the board's policy on teacher evaluation.

Arrangements differ for newly appointed teachers and for teachers on continuing contracts.

First-year teachers, whether new to the profession or new to the school, are visited by the principal at least four times and usually five times in the year. The principal explains that, over the years "most of them don't like to know when I am coming," so that he tells them only that he will be visiting them in the near future. There are no previsitation conferences for this group of teachers. Moreover, the principals notes that he tells the new teachers what he expects of them during the hiring process.

During each classroom visit, the principal reviews their plan book for both long-range plans and lesson plans, the recording of student test results, and attendance. He places great importance on accurate record keeping. At the same time he makes notes about the conduct of the class and shares these with the teacher some time after the class. His purposes at this stage are to give the new teachers confidence, but also to ensure that they are teaching the prescribed curriculum, maintaining class-room control, making good lesson plans, and recording pupil achievement and attendance. At the end of January he prepares a written report, which is given to the teacher and the two sit down to discuss it.

Continuing contract teachers are treated differently. They are assessed every three years. At the beginning of the year, the central office of the board sends to the school the list of teachers who are to be assessed. The principal gives these teachers a form to fill out. In addition to basic information, the teachers write out some of their objectives. Previsitation conferences with these teachers are followed by up to six or seven classroom visits. An effort is made to observe every class/subject that the teacher is responsible for. Finally a summative report is written, which is shared with the teacher.

The purposes of the teacher evaluation process, according to the principal, are threefold: (a) to enable the principal to know in detail all aspects of the school, what is occurring in the classrooms, and how the students are behaving and learning in each classroom; (b) to identify those teachers who could be promoted to positions of additional responsibility; and (c) to motivate teachers. However, the motif of this principal's primary concerns is control. He explains the purpose of evaluation in these terms:

> making sure lesson plans are done—making sure day to day stuff like attendance and all these sort of things are taken care of—the proper number of marks are in their mark books. [making sure that] all those things are accurate because in high school you are always concerned about people appealing marks and things like that. I want to make sure that policies are being followed—to make sure they are actually following course outlines that were submitted to all the students early in the year.

Vice-Principals

Although teacher evaluation is the sole task of the principal, he has assigned follow-up duties to his vice-principals. Continuing contract teachers whose final assessment indicates room for improvement are assigned to one of the vice-principals for followup assessments in the next year. Vice-principals go over the previous reports with the teachers and suggest strategies for improvement. These may include inservice courses, reading, or attempting new strategies. Vice-principals will monitor these teachers' performance during the year through classroom visits. A report is prepared at the end of the year.

The interviews with the vice-principals indicate the strong role of the principal in the school, even though some of the assistants hold differing views concerning the evaluation process. One of the assistants makes it clear at the start of the interview that he speaks only for himself in terms of teacher evaluation. He maintains the focus on his own way of teacher evaluation when asked about the process. Both assistants state their beliefs that the primary objective of teacher evaluation is the professional growth of the teacher. Evaluation viewed in this context is very time-consuming. A great deal of time is spent talking to the teacher and observing as many classes as possible. The assistants attempt to make the teacher comfortable with the process and dedicated to goal of improvement. There are always preconferences and postconferences. One of the assistants states that evaluation is "a collaborative process" that requires an "informed teacher" and a sincere, committed, and competent evaluator.

Peer Visits

All teachers are encouraged to visit each other. The purposes for this exercise are not clearly defined, but such a practice would allow teachers to find out about practices that other teachers are using, to view new techniques, and for those who would wish to, make it possible to initiate some form of peer evaluation. The principal gives visibility to this requirement by means of a large wall chart in the staff room. It lists the names of all the teachers and indicates which teachers have been visited by their peers, the subject taught, and the date of the visit. By early spring, the chart indicates that most teachers have visited at least one colleague and several teachers have received five or more visits.

First-year Teachers

Understandably, first-year teachers are very concerned about the impression they are creating in the school (or indeed in the profession). They wonder about the focus for the evaluation, the criteria that they will be evaluated on, and the point of view of the principal. Their anxieties appear to be heightened by the policy of no preconferences with the principal. He merely informs them that they will be visited in their classes this semester or within the next week or so. This state of anxiety is captured in one first year teacher's depiction of evaluation as a surprise attack.

> Our principal is very strict in his beliefs. The way it [evaluation] is done is more like a game. A surprise attack. I've heard of some schools where there is some warning. I think morale is hurt in this school. There should be some confidence in teachers' professional ability. In your first year, evaluation is hard enough without a surprise attack aspect. I wonder, wow, am I going to catch it?

Other first year teachers also referred to the principal's classroom visits as "surprise attacks."

First year teachers with experience in other schools talked at length about their prior experience, usually to contrast that experience with the practice that they were being subjected to in their first year at Belleville.

Overall, first year teachers describe the experience in the following terms. There is no advance notice of a visit except for a general announcement that visits will be made. There are generally three visits before Christmas. The first visit is a drop-in visit for about 10 minutes to get acquainted with the class and the teacher's style. A second visit is similar. One new teacher, however, reported that the visits to her class lasted between 25 to 40 minutes each. In all cases, the principal checked the plan book, lesson plans, test results, and attendance records. Usually the principal has a brief talk with the teacher after the visit. However, these postsession talks are not very productive. One teacher remarked about his comments:

> I thought maybe he ... was talking about somebody else because it didn't sound like something that I felt was going on in my class.

Contrasting this experience with the evaluation provided in another jurisdiction, a teacher reports that previous evaluations were "more of a professional development thing that someone would come in and help me to develop as a teacher," but that feeling was absent in the present evaluation experience.

Another new teacher said that the postconferences dealt with her standards for dealing with student behavior such as arriving late in class, student absences, students with food in the class and related disciplinary issues. She found the principal's behavior to be very authoritarian and not very helpful. In fact she resented the subjugation of her vision of good teaching to someone else's vision. She contrasted this style of evaluation with the form she had become accustomed to in her student teaching practica, which she characterized as more professional, more objective, and based on negotiated growth.

Following the three pre-Christmas visits, a formal report is written and communicated to the teacher. The reaction to the reports varies from one teacher to another. One stated simply that the principal was satisfied with what he observed and there were no major recommendations, but he did bring up "a couple of points." Other first-year teachers also were unable to recall any substantive recommendations for improvement that the principal may have made. Another teacher found that the recommendations in the evaluation report were neither significant nor helpful:

> I haven't been able to apply what was said in my evaluation because I don't know which way to go. I got the idea that I'm not doing too badly, but what does that mean? I haven't made any connections yet, within myself, between the report and my teaching.

The impact of this process on new teachers is varied. First they comment on their relative ignorance of the goals of the evaluation, which is underscored by the lack of a previsit conference with the principal. They are aware that he has an agenda or "the list" of things the principal is looking for while in their classroom. A new teacher comments on this after talking about a list and says:

> maybe one of the underlying philosophies with our principal is that if you don't know what is being checked out you will be careful of everything.

This degree of uncertainty has brought new teachers together. One teacher states:

> I would have to say that I am more closely associated with the first-year teachers than the others. We've discussed just sort of the pressure and a little bit of the tension of it [evaluation]. We are more into just helping each other along—giving ideas—brainstorming ideas.

At the second interview in the spring the same teacher comments:

> The staff have devised numerous ways to warn each other when the principal may drop in. Some teachers have prepared the kids. They tell them things like—when the principal is here and I ask a question I want everyone to put their hand up—your right one if you know the answer your left one if you don't. I don't do this but I hear of it. I think it is the way people cope under duress.

The Evaluation Report

The evaluation report used in this school, the official division report form, focuses on recommendations for improvement. Whereas some of the teachers did not think that the scope and nature of some of the recommendations were significant, several teachers took great exception to the format of the report. A first-year teacher who has had six visits and two formal reports indicates the negative consequences of this format.

> I know it [evaluation] is different in this school. I would not have a report that is all recommendations in another school. If you are looking for a job in another place a report that is all recommendations would be considered negative. The person getting all the recommendations may still be the better teacher than another candidate, but if the prospective employer is looking for a positive report you would miss out. Therefore it [the report] is not valid beyond this building. Everyone in the division knows this principal and the report is subject to that interpretation. Outside our division, though, it is a different matter.

A senior teacher expresses concern with the format of reports that focus on recommendations. She says:

> I don't know if the feeling "downstairs" is so negative toward teachers or if it is just perceived that way, but no new teachers ever know they're doing O.K. or that they have potential.
>
> The way new teachers are treated shatters them. I see what is going on in their classrooms and there is no need for them to be treated the way they are. I might add, they are the ones who need encouragement.

Evaluation and Theory of Teaching

Evaluation schemes often have an underlying theory of teaching. New teachers in this school feel that the principal places a premium on student control and discipline. This set of priorities, they feel, affects the evaluations they receive, and to achieve favorable reviews from the principal they alter their teaching style. One teacher suggested that style and creativity are aspects of teaching that are sacrificed when the focus is on control. Although this teacher has a preference for a collaborative style of classroom, he no longer teaches that way. He comments:

> even if I firmly believe in a cooperative classroom I'm not going to do it because I know what the principal wants to see.

Experienced Teachers

The evaluation of experienced teachers is conducted every three years. There are exceptions to this general rule. Teachers applying for promotion are evaluated, and teachers who had a significant number of recommendations for improvement in their last report are evaluated the following year by one of the vice-principals.

One senior teacher, very comfortable in his role, was quite positive about his experiences in the school. This teacher does not want to know when the principal is coming for a visit. He appreciates the fact that the principal will see the teacher in every class he teaches. He believes that the purpose of the evaluation of experienced teachers is mainly for accountability purposes. As a result of the process he feels that he has been affirmed as a professional. His personal report had little by way of recommendations. There was an opportunity for him to discuss the report with the principal, but he did not take advantage of it.

Another experienced teacher had a similar reaction. The principal visited his class unannounced on six occasions. The debriefing indicated that the principal appreciated his teaching style: good discipline, structured activities and students on task, a variety of teaching methods. Appreciation was also expressed for his work in student sports.

This teacher takes evaluation as a part of the job. He attempts to assess his own progress. He mentioned that the principal has set one particular goal for him. He established a plan for achieving that goal and the principal was satisfied with the results. As comfortable as he is in his relationship with the principal, this teacher notes that most teachers do not like to be evaluated. In this school in particular, many teachers are upset about the lack of notice for evaluation visits. This worry, he notes, tends to bring teachers together, but not for positive purposes. Overall, he recommends implementing a system of peer coaching and evaluation in lieu of the present system.

Teachers express their support for evaluation generally in many ways, both in terms of "weeding out poor teachers" and in terms of wanting feedback in regard to their teaching. An experienced teacher comments: "Evaluation keeps you on your toes. I like to see those teachers who might slack off having to share the workload." Another experienced teacher says:

> I think evaluation is necessary because we would be fooling ourselves if we thought everyone is entirely conscientious in the classroom. I am accountable and the administration must be accountable to others outside the school.

Overall, the evaluation process seems to have little impact on experienced teachers. There appears to be little or no professional development or growth on the part of senior teachers at this school *as a result of the evaluation process*. This suggests that significant professional growth occurs instead as a result of many personal and professional activities.

Teachers' Beliefs about Evaluation

The teachers in this school express strong and relatively consistent beliefs about the ideal nature of evaluation. First, teachers believe that they should have a voice in the evaluation. Not having a voice in either the focus of the evaluation nor in the report affects their perception of the relationship they have with the evaluator. They indicated in a number of ways that the relationship as they perceive it has to do with power. Their comments indicate that they perceive the process as it is practiced in Belleville as an example of power. For example, a senior teacher says:

> I think there is a strong feeling among administrators that evaluation is a power thing. I have heard the principal say right out that if you tell teachers they are doing a good job they will slack off and never do another thing.

Another senior teacher states:

> From a central office point of view it [evaluation] assures that they have good teachers working for them, but from a teacher view it doesn't matter whether you agree or not; you have to take steps to respond to the recommendations.

A first year teacher talks about the kind of relationship she would like to have with her evaluator. The relationship she envisions is a mentor/protegee type but with her as an active partner in the choice. She says:

> you should go out there actively seeking somebody who can help you out. [Superiors or leaders] have some sort of responsibility to sort of make sure that's happening. I think it is at a personal level; actually being there at a one-to-one level. I don't think administration can do it. They are capable, but I'm not sure sort of nurturing that new teacher is timewise for them.

A first-year teacher harks back to the evaluation process she experienced during student teaching as one she appreciated. What she appreciated about it is the personal relationship she had with the evaluator.

> What happened was in my evaluation with my cooperating teacher, we developed a very good personal relationship ... so I would have no fears of discussing anything—like I'm losing it, like I'm nervous, I'm this and that and the other thing. [In this school] it is much more antiseptic, it's much more—it's formal. It's not personal. It's not negotiated. It's a procedure.

A senior teacher who was evaluated by one of the vice-principals comments on the importance of evaluation in terms of teacher self esteem. She says:

> In my case the experience was so positive it made me stand tall as a professional. In these days when everyone has an opinion on public education it is really important to have professional affirmation. Teaching is becoming more difficult. I don't want to start wearing down. Teachers are the ones who must face everything that is thrown at them. Evaluation has an impact on my personal motivation.

A first-year teacher comments on how she evaluates herself and on how she needs feedback from others. She indicates that she is self- evaluative and knows when she has made mistakes.

> I am looking at the negative aspects of things [her own failures in the classroom]. In teaching you don't get a lot of outside positive feedback. You're out there with the kids and you need to be able to say: "is there something positive here?" You're not going to get it from someone else. It's almost getting at mental health ... I try to be perfect and I say what am I in this profession for? Hopefully, I'm doing something right—something to focus on as a good teacher. I don't want to burn out.

She goes on to connect her own struggle for self-esteem within herself to the way she tries to do this with students. She says:

> I think there is a fundamental essence to evaluation and that has to do with teacher as learner just like in student as learner. You try to facilitate the growth of the individual on their schedule. You have to say, this person as an individual where are they starting from? In my own evaluation I am saying, I hope I have a base from which I am starting—can you guide me? Can you direct me? Can you help me along my path in my search and quest for who I am as a teacher? I think there is a very similar parallel [in her relationship with students].

Conclusions

What is reported is a snapshot of one process within a school over a one-year period. It is not a picture of the entire school. Thus there is the danger of some aspects of the school being taken out of context. Some factors to be considered when reviewing the teacher evaluation practices observed in this year are the following. There

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is a high proportion (over 25%) of first-year teachers in the school. This is highly unusual in a time and place where there is little movement in the teaching profession. Second, the school is at full capacity and many of its physical facilities are highly taxed and have been found wanting by a number of educators. These factors may be contributing elements to the style of evaluation found in this particular year.

School Climate

It appears to an outsider that there is an emphasis on control in Belleville High School. The principal, junior administrators and teachers have attested to it. No attempt was made in this study to discover the reasons for that motif in the school. However, such an administrative orientation does have consequences. That teachers perceive accountability in adherence to rules and policies as the major purpose of evaluation in this school limits the utility of the process for the purposes of instructional improvement. It was even suggested by one teacher that students are drawn into a conspiracy, which underscores the nature of the we-them atmosphere in the school.

The Purpose of Evaluation

The principal's understanding of what underpins teacher evaluation is clearly accountability and monitoring for compliance. He refers to the possibility of problems arising with teachers, and he wants evaluation data so he can discuss it. A tone of self-preservation is apparent in what the principal says, as well as an expectation that there will be problems although they may not be apparent now. His use of the phrase *the teachers I have to do* indicates that he understands evaluation as something that he does to teachers. There is no evidence that he acts on his stated belief that evaluation serves to help teachers grow.

The teacher evaluation form places the emphasis on recommendations for teacher improvement. Whereas this may suggest to some a positive approach, many teachers look upon it as a means of listing only their shortcomings. The evaluation process does not stress the teacher's strengths. It does not enhance teacher self-esteem by recording strengths and accomplishments. Paradoxically, a sparse report is the mark of a good teacher.

The Evaluation Process

This school invests a great deal of time and energy in the teacher evaluation process. This investment alone is an indication of the importance teacher evaluation occupies. Actually, in this school, much of the evaluation activity is limited to only part of the evaluation process. Certainly the amount of administrator time spent in classrooms constitutes *monitoring* of the classroom processes. However, even here it is evident that much of the monitoring focuses on adherence to disciplinary practices and regulations. To some extent administrators also ensure that the prescribed curriculum is being taught. However, there is little evidence that the evaluators were concerned with teaching methods or with student learning, particularly where first year teachers were concerned. Even the process of monitoring this reduced slice of teaching practice does not always yield data on which both parties (evaluator and evaluatee) agree. Because there is not always agreement on what is transpiring in the classroom, there cannot be commitment for improvement.

Finally, because there is little or no discussion about appropriate teaching goals and teaching styles, it is difficult to conceive how the process can engage teachers in the process of professional growth. It is the lack of encouragement of reflection on professional practices that ultimately stifles professional growth.

Discussion and Recommendations

Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

Teachers in the Bloomsville School Division appear to view teacher evaluation as a necessary means of ensuring professional accountability. They support a process that identifies their strengths and weaknesses, provides for the early detection of problems, and eliminates incompetent and unprofessional teachers. They also want a rigorous evaluation process. The term *rigorous* appears to be used to describe more in-depth evaluations that involve an evaluator who is familiar with the context in which they teach, attempts to assess their total teaching assignment, takes into consideration their extracurricular involvement, and comes into their classrooms a number of times (more than three) throughout the year. A majority of teachers supported frequent unannounced visits by their principals on the basis that it gives the evaluator a better idea of the everyday realities of their teaching world. Their comfort in having an evaluator in the classroom was contingent upon their rapport with the evaluator.

In the case of Belleville, the less experienced teachers viewed the drop-in visits by their principal as a kind of inspection of their duty; in Navan, where there was an atmosphere of greater collegiality, visits to classrooms were used to get to know teachers and students and what was happening in the school. The outcome of these unannounced visits was positive notes in teachers' mailboxes or discussions regarding suggestions for doing things differently.

Meaningful Evaluation

For the evaluation process to be meaningful to the teachers and to help them to improve upon their practice a number of preconditions were necessary. First they need to have a good rapport with their evaluators—good rapport meaning that they trust and respect the evaluator personally and professionally. In some cases teachers wanted feedback from evaluators with subject-area expertise, so they could become more effective in how they taught a particular subject; or, they wanted the evaluator to be a master teacher, that is, with pedagogical expertise.

Second, teachers were concerned that their conception of the effective teacher be compatible with the evaluator's perspective, and their differences not prejudicially affect the final evaluation report. Some teachers talked about the importance of being able to discuss with the evaluator what they believe is important in practice in their classroom (i.e., their philosophical orientation), and what they perceive to constitute effective teaching.

Teachers also want suggestions to improve their practice, and therefore appreciate evaluators who are master teachers and have subject area expertise. In order for the evaluation process to have real meaning for teachers and to affect their practice in the classroom they need to trust and respect the evaluator.

A teacher comments on the stress of evaluations done as one-shot deals and by virtual strangers:

> I came from a system where it was all done by central office people. The principal came in maybe once every two or three years and the central office every two or three years. That was an incredibly high stress situation. They come in for half an hour and base two years on that without much reference to what you've done for the school. I mean there is so much more that should be included—your extracurricular time, your rapport with the students, intermingling in hallways, things like that. It's such a better evaluation when it comes from a principal who takes time to get to know you and recognizes all that you've done.

Another teacher, reflecting his previous evaluation experience, commented on the stress of external evaluators.

> Somebody who didn't know me gave me a week's notice and told me he was going to come into my class. He didn't show up. He then gave another week's notice to come in and still didn't show up. It's terribly high stress. Very unsettling because he was looking for something totally different than what I at the time felt was important. Yeah, there's very negative ways of doing evaluations and some very positive ways.

Teachers who admitted that they changed any practice as a result of the evaluation, tended to be beginning teachers. Experienced teachers did not feel that the evaluation practices altered their behavior in any significant way.

For some experienced teachers, the evaluation is a harmless process which reaffirms them as professionals; for others it is an unpredictable stressful activity which impacts on them psychologically, but has little impact on their classroom practice. In terms of the provincial policy, with the exception of beginning teachers, evaluation as practiced does little to enhance instruction or the professional growth of teachers. In terms of the major efforts on evaluation, the key outcomes appear to be assuring administrators that current regulations and policies are being adhered to, and to ensure that administrators have a grasp on what is happening in classrooms.

In conclusion, the approach to teacher evaluation demonstrated in Navan and Belleville schools are a reflection of the administrator's perspectives of how the evaluation process fits into their role as administrator in the school. In Navan, the principal attempts to be more of an instructional leader, where as in Belleville the principal is the manager of the school. The focus on management and accountability is evidenced in his evaluation methods; and the focus on collegiality and growth is evidenced in the approach used by the principal of Navan. It is also interesting to consider to what degree the structure of a large senior high school with a high percentage of first year teachers lends itself more to evaluation as professional accountability; and a rural small elementary-junior high school permits a more in-depth evaluation process.

A Critique of the Teacher Evaluation Policy

The analysis of teacher evaluation in the Bloomsville School Division indicates the inappropriateness of the current provincial teacher evaluation policy. The policy is clearly stated and has major support from all levels of Alberta Education. There has been major investments in training administrators to become evaluators. School districts have promulgated policies. Many hours are invested each year by school principals in the task of evaluation.

However, school board policies in general (see Chapter 3) emphasize accountability rather than instructional improvement. This disjuncture between provincial policy and school division policies points to a weakness in the provincial policy itself.

A successful organization achieves its goals, maintains itself, and nurtures within itself the resources for change and development. Therefore, a good management strategy is to assess the organization and its activities in light of these three major objectives. In examining the activities of the organization, the overriding goal is the achievement of educational objectives of each individual student. The complexity of the issue for educational institutions is that the term "educational objectives" will have different meanings for each individual student and for those responsible (parents) for the students, and those who will have to come to depend upon those students when they take up lives beyond secondary school (employers, citizens, neighbors, postsecondary institutions, colleagues, family members, employees, and the myriad other people who will come to depend in one way or another on each school graduate). Leaving aside this complexity, each organization looks beyond this overriding goal to verify other factors that, sooner or later, will impact on its goals. These factors include the quality of teacher force, the quality of the management, the nature of the technology, the ability to deal with changes in society, and other intermediary factors in the long term success of the organization.

The primary focus of any evaluation should be on the achievement of major goals. The schools studied here did not appear to tie in teacher evaluation with student performance. In most cases the teachers stated that the evaluation activities did not impact directly on student performance.

Is teacher evaluation linked to any of the intermediary factors associated with organizational success? Generally there was no discussion of any such links. Evaluation was not linked to improved teaching strategies (with the exception of a few beginning teachers), to new curricula, to enhanced skills, to the development of the teacher work force, to innovative teaching or managerial strategies, to the use of new technology, to improved decision making or communication skills and processes within the organization, or to any other significant determinant of organizational success. In spite of the extraordinary effort given to evaluation activities by division administrators, the results of the teacher evaluation practices of this division are quite typical of what occurs in school districts across the country. The major benefits of the evaluation activities as carried out in this division were (a) to give the principals a good, first-hand knowledge of what is occurring in most classes in the school; and (b) a measure of control to ensure that current policies and regulations are adhered to. The purposes and results are bureaucratic and control activities. The above purposes could be carried out more expeditiously and at much less cost by other methods.

One of the dangers of the current provincial policy, with its emphasis on "evaluation," is that it focuses on the inspection function of evaluation and detracts from the teacher development dimension. The greatest gain for any organization is program development to meet the challenges of changes in society and changes in the students. Teaching organizations also improve when teachers become proficient in a range of techniques that make use of new technologies and the results of new knowledge in the fields of learning, child and adolescent development, communication, teaching, social forces, family dynamics, and related topics. Teacher evaluation in this division does not register improvements in the level of teaching skills, program enhancements, or organizational abilities to improve student learning.

Generally speaking, the teacher evaluation practices have not addressed the inherent difficulties of personnel assessment.

Personnel assessment can be considered to be of two types: a judgment of the degree to which an individual has met standards or shared judgments concerning the need and the appropriateness of growth and development. The first type was in evidence when new teachers were assessed. Essentially, administrators were making judgments concerning the new teachers' adherence to rules and demonstration of basic instructional skills. Administrators make these judgments with little or no discussion with the teachers, and then make recommendations for the granting or withholding of a permanent contract.

The second type requires the collaboration of the evaluator and the person evaluated. It requires a sense of confidence in the other party. It requires trust. Beyond these prerequisites, there must be consensus on goals, on observed facts, on the meanings given to those observations, and on the appropriateness of selected strategies to meet goals. In one school confidence was expressed in the competence of the evaluator and trust in the evaluator; in the other school there was a lack of mutual trust. In both schools, but with differences in degree, there was a lack of consensus on goals, at least to the extent that the teacher was unsure of what the principal wanted. In one school in some instances the teacher either disagreed with the "facts" that were "observed" by the principal or the meaning assigned to those observations. Without such agreement (or at least unless the teacher is prepared to suspend judgment temporarily to test the principal's ideas) there can be no commitment by the teacher to any program of improvement. Finally, unless there is consensus on strategies for improvement there can be no lasting improvement. For example, an incident is cited where a teacher, giving in to the power of the principal, made some changes to her procedures. Either she will leave the organization or she will revert to her previous methods as soon as possible. In the meantime, the organization will have to bear the costs of poor morale. This process of individual personnel assessment is delicate, necessitates considerable skill, and requires a great deal of time. Even were it to function well, the costs in comparison with benefits are probably exorbitant.

The alternative, of focusing on assessment of school programs and on professional development to meet school goals, would bring to bear on the organizational problems the abilities of all staff members. The group processes themselves would also be forces for change and improvement. This is what modern management techniques have taught the most successful organizations. Only when major problems with this process present themselves (and experience has shown that it seldom does) can the manager turn to consider alternative definitions of the problem. Only one of those alternatives is the clinical assessment of one or more task group members.

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Chapter 12

Case Studies of Woodlands School Division and Tamarack School District

Introduction

This report documents case studies in evaluation from two school jurisdictions, one rural and one urban. From one school division a junior high school's efforts to improve teacher evaluation with both new and experienced teachers is described. From the school district three case studies are documented. The first of these examines the intended and experienced two-year process for evaluation of probationary teachers. The second looks at the continuing evaluation of experienced teachers through the eyes of administrators. The third describes the early stages of an innovative approach to the evaluation of administrators.

Definition of Collaborative Action Research

We define collaborative action research as a variety of stakeholders cooperating together to explore questions of mutual interest through cycles of action, experience and reflection, in order to develop insights into particular phenomena, create frameworks for understanding, and suggest actions to improve practice and inform policy.

Establishing the Collaborative Action Research Relationship and Climate:

The Context for the Case Studies

Relationships among university personnel, school administrators, and teachers are confounded by the fact that they have different work lives and roles and, therefore, different preoccupations and languages. Issues such as status, power, and legitimacy enter the picture, making trust and mutual respect sometimes problematic. What one group will disclose to another group is sometimes severely constrained by these intergroup difficulties. Moving beyond verbal exchange to taking risks in action in mixed stakeholder groups is riddled with all sorts of difficulties. Indeed, collegiality and collaboration even *among teachers in the same context* is problematic (Butt, Townsend, & Raymond, 1992, p. 262). These problems question the value of data gathered by outside researchers who work in traditional research relationships and point out the desirability of collaborative action research. Simultaneously, however, they illustrate the difficulty of creating the sense of collegiality necessary for collaborative action research. These issues are further confounded in this project by the fact that *teacher evaluation* is the phenomenon to be explored.

Bearing these concerns in mind, the establishment of good collegial relations with a sense of equality and mutual respect among stakeholder groups in our case study sites was essential. We chose, therefore, to offer the chance to participate in this project to teachers and administrators in two school jurisdictions with whom we had already worked for the past three to seven years on a number of developmental and collaborative action research projects related to teacher development. We felt that this enhanced the possibility that conditions conducive to collaborative action research existed or could be quickly recreated, as well as providing us with a pool of school personnel who had previously been prepared to take risks.

Historical Contexts of Collaboration and Teacher Development

Woodlands School Division

Five years ago we conducted a three-day seminar for the administrators of Woodlands School Division. The topic was "An Integrative Model for School-Based Staff Development," which attempted to draw together and model through experiential learning all pertinent research on school-based staff development. The synergy of a wide variety of approaches applied at the school level was designed to give school staffs ownership of their own professional development and build a sense of community. Among other approaches, the seminar included skills for teacher development, peer supervision, and teacher evaluation. We also used teacher life history approaches to help teachers better understand their response to their working realities, their teaching dispositions, and their development as teachers and persons over time in their career and personal lives. These processes enabled teachers to set individual and group agendas for professional development grounded in personal needs and aspirations related to their own professional lives.

Following this workshop we were asked to invite the teachers of the division to participate with us in school-based projects. Sixty teachers and administrators volunteered to participate following a one-day information session and a subsequent one-day readiness session. They donated two days of their holiday in August to participate in a two-day Teachers' Stories seminar that culminated in each group identifying one school-based project that would address individual and collective interests and needs derived from their examination of their career histories. We worked in a collaborative manner with these groups throughout the school year. The next academic year we repeated the project for approximately seven new groups and continued work with the original participants. We also began working with an internal team who would begin to take over from us as facilitators of this work. Over three years we worked with approximately 13 groups from different schools and over 150 participants. Our work with these groups was intended to be an informal form of collaborative action research and, in reality, a significant number of groups reached the stage whereby, within their projects, they posed professional development questions, experimented in their classrooms (sometimes with team teaching and peer visitations) and, through peer consultation, reflected on their experiences in cycles of action research. The quality of our relationships with these school-based teams, their focus on teacher development, and the climate of collaborative action research provided a fruitful context for our interest in researching the possibilities in teacher evaluation for teacher development.

Tamarack School District

In September 1985 one of the researchers started a development and training project in Tamarack School District. This project provided teachers and administrators with the necessary supervisory skills, derived from clinical supervision, for the establishment of an evaluation system and a system for collegial supervision directed to the improvement of teaching.

Groups of teachers and administrators were trained through workshops in each of the years 1985 through 1987. At that point an internal coaching team that had been prepared for the task took over this training. This process is continuing. In addition, advanced training sessions have been provided for those who were interested. To date, probably close to 90% of teachers and administrators have received some form of training related to teacher evaluation and supervision.

In 1987 the other researcher began working with a University of Lethbridge-based research team that had been contracted to research the impact of a Model of Supervision and Evaluation in Tamarack School District. His particular task was to work with several other researchers documenting case studies of four schools' efforts. These case studies were longitudinal, comprising three years in duration. Data were gathered through interviews with all stakeholder groups as the project proceeded. As well, researchers were participant-observers in various aspects of the project. In the last year of the project, it was possible to identify several schools and groups of educators who had managed to create some significantly distinct collaborative processes related to teacher development, supervision, peer consultation, and evaluation. The case study teams documented these pockets of activity. In all cases, school participants volunteered to participate and were involved in negotiating the design of the case studies. They also were involved in validating all written reports. In this sense, then, the case study research was collaborative in nature, and the project, due to its developmental nature of three or more years, was oriented toward action research.

During the three years we observed this project several trends evolved in the more successful groups of teachers and schools. First, what originally was a top-down initiative became a project owned and operated by school-based educators. Second, the original primary focus moved from processes of evaluation by administrators to include more of the processes of supervision, teacher development, peer coaching, and peer consultation among teachers. In groups of teachers and administrators who had actively engaged in the project, evaluation became more of an outcome or by-product of processes of teacher development. In these groups, as opposed to the earlier practice of teachers being assigned or chosen as administrative partners or teacher partners, partners were mutually agreed upon. The formality of the original practice of the model evolved into a compatible level of informality as teachers became comfortable with their partners. Perceptions of isolation moved to feelings of professional growth and collegiality. The fact that not all schools were able to create these conditions and processes after three years of effort demonstrates the difficulties of applying skills in the crowded reality of educators' lives and creating the culture of trust necessary for educators to take risks. Nevertheless, where the project was given priority, and where risks were taken, it did have a clear impact. Regardless of overall impact in terms of processes of teacher development, most teachers felt that a system of teacher evaluation acceptable to them had been achieved. The evaluation process enabled teachers to have input into what should be observed, and when, and for what. Evaluation reports were derived from a series of connected visits. Reports were based as far as possible on descriptions of observed behavior rather than solely on subjective judgment of the supervisor.

The study of the pockets of activity revealed the potential of school-based teacher development projects for creating partnerships among teachers and administrators. In these contexts, the nature of the teacher development and evaluation project was adapted to suit the needs and purposes of all the participants.

Building on this, during the last two years we have worked in helping approximately 100 educators in this district in their pursuit of teacher development. We worked with 10 different school-based groups, each of which included teachers and at least one administrator. Through life story work they identified group projects and we assisted each group in developing a supportive and collaborative framework in which they could continue to work. Further details of this process are included in the description of the second case study context below.

Our purpose here has been to describe the historical and contextual conditions that existed in Tamarack School District. We feel our relationship with the personnel of the district facilitated collaborative action research and provided a significant history of development in teacher evaluation for innovative practices to occur.

Methodology

Finding Partners for Collaborative Action Research

Because of the collaborative nature of our research approach it was essential that we locate groups of teachers and administrators who were active in the area of teacher evaluation, and who were therefore likely to be innovative and confident in the area. We also needed to involve people who wished to participate in this research.

In Woodlands School Division we issued an invitation to participate in this research project to our school-based staff development groups. From a number of possible schools that volunteered we chose a junior high school. In the previous year a group from this school had been particularly successful in its staff development efforts; teachers were very much involved in the process but the group also involved both administrators. This group developed a high level of trust and mutual respect. Besides engaging in a series of activities for their own professional development, they, with the remainder of the staff, also planned and implemented activities that involved the whole school.

The principal of the school had recently finished an MEd thesis that inquired into the nature of teacher evaluation, and he was beginning to implement some of the practical implications in his own school staff development work. He and his vice-principal developed their ideas further for the purposes of participating in this study. Ten teachers, both veteran and neophyte, volunteered to participate in the study.

In Tamarack School District we met with a group of administrators and key teachers who had been invited to attend an information session on the nature of our research. Following this session several people volunteered to work with us on the study. It should be noted here, too, that many educators in this district who had a lot of experience with teacher evaluation and who were known to be knowledgeable in the field declined to participate. Most of these felt they were already busy enough, and involvement in a research project would take time and energy away from other things that needed their attention. In our work with school groups we have often found that it is not only the uncommitted teachers who elect not to get involved in some activities. It seems to us that there are so many things in the lives of teachers to which they cannot say "No!" that even the most committed of them when given a genuine choice will sometimes grasp the opportunity to decline with a certain satisfaction.

The group of volunteers in Tamarack School District comprised one elementary vice-principal, three elementary principals, three secondary vice-principals, two assistant superintendents, and the superintendent. Later in the year one high school principal and another elementary vice-principal contributed to the study. Several members of this group had extensive course work and practice through postgraduate education in the area of supervision and teacher evaluation. Each was involved in systematic evaluation of teachers and/or administrators throughout the year. All had experience with the development and implementation of innovative practices in teacher evaluation.

Data Gathering Procedures

Establishing a Baseline Perception of Usual Practices in Teacher Evaluation

At the outset of the study, in order to provide us and the reader with a comparative sense of innovative and usual practices in teacher evaluation, we solicited accounts from teachers in Woodlands School Division as to what they had experienced in teacher evaluation prior to any recent local improvements. We did this only in Woodlands School Division because its innovative efforts were more recent than those of Tamarack School District. They provided us with anonymous written accounts of their experiences, which were subjected to procedures of content analysis in order to identify themes and patterns. An interpretation of these data is found in the Results sections of this chapter.

Gathering Case Study Data

Woodlands School Division

At the junior high school our collaborative action research case study involved 10 teachers, four of whom were first-year teachers and three of whom were second-year teachers. Three veteran teachers were also involved in teacher evaluation for that year. One had 25 years, one had four years, and one had 27 years of teaching experience.

Following our initial organizational meeting in September 1991, periodic visits were made to the school approximately every six weeks to gather data as various aspects of the project proceeded. On each occasion data were gathered from individual teachers and from the principal and vice-principal regarding activities related to their teacher evaluation project. We used mainly interviews recorded both through verbatim scripting and tape recordings.

Tamarack School District

Following our initial meetings, participating administrators and teachers were interviewed periodically throughout the year. Three administrators contributed written reports to the study. A group of probationary teachers was interviewed at the end of year in an attempt to cross-reference their experiences of the evaluation process with the impressions of those administrators responsible for the evaluation of probationary teachers.

Interpretation of Data

In both jurisdictions qualitative data were subjected to content analysis throughout the year in order to provide a record of the progress of the projects as well as overall outcomes.

Patterns and themes were identified and have been illustrated where necessary through the participants' own words or paraphrases. All interpretations have been validated by each group of participants. Modifications have been made as a result of this process.

Results

This section includes an interpretation of the baseline data related to participants' earlier experiences with evaluation. It will also include accounts of how each subproject was set up through the collaborative actions of the project participants. These proposed actions and means are reported here as *results* because they were regarded as outcomes of the collaborative action research process. Following this account, stage-by-stage data interpretations are reported for each case study in turn, starting with the junior high school in Woodlands School Division and followed by the evaluation of probationary teachers, experienced teachers, and administrators in Tamarack School District.

Baseline Data

This section provides teachers' impressions of their experiences with normal approaches to teacher evaluation prior to any attempts to involve teachers in the process. As well, we provide teachers' views on what could be done to improve teacher evaluation so that it is seen to be accurately documenting where they are as well as assisting in their professional development. We provide two ways of understanding teachers feelings' and experiences of normal practices of teacher education. The first is through two teachers' stories, and the second reflects data gathered from teachers prior to the beginning of this study.

Teachers' Stories

A collection of over 100 teacher stories gathered using the process of collaborative autobiography has revealed that intercollegial relations, both positive and negative, with peers and superordinates, is the strongest determining characteristic of the quality of teachers' work lives and the context for teacher development. The process of teacher evaluation is strongly influenced by the quality of superordinate-subordinate relations. The following two stories illustrate, perhaps, the worst of experiences that we wish to avoid; later sections of the report move gradually to the positive and the possible experiences.

I like my classroom. It is a huge sunny space, and there is lots of room for my handful of students. I have made this place as comfortable as I can, mostly by using color. There is a pile of pillows in pastel shades, with bulletin boards, desks, tabletops, and balloons hanging from the ceiling in the same soft colors ... I am enjoying the feeling of the place I am in when the bell rings and within seconds Ossie, Chris, Don, Dale and the rest of the class come in. They progress down the hallway in short bursts of sound and movement. I meet them at the door, and they walk in and settle themselves on the oval rug. Between themselves they sort out which of them gets to hold the two classroom teddy bears, and they begin the morning in the usual way, that is, by spending a few minutes either reading a book or writing in their journals. I begin the morning by sitting in the corner with them, writing. I am writing an adventure story that stars the kids in my classroom, and they are quite eager for each new day's instalment ... the one girl in the class, Beverly, is, of course, the princess in the story. The boys all ride milk-white or coal-black steeds and fight dragons and wild bears in order to save her from an evil queen.... Their eyes glow when I read the story to them, Sir Ossie the Powerful, Sir Chris the Magnificent, Princess Beverly the Wise, and so on. They each have a part and they listen for the mention of their own names with the same eagerness each day. Today's episode is "Rescue at the Stone Bridge," which involves a confrontation between Sir Dale and the Red Fairy. I feel a sense of achievement as I write because the children are all either reading or writing too, and there is an air of happiness about them. It is going to be a good morning. They are looking forward to the story that they know is coming out the end of my pen, and nobody has as yet chosen to break the calm.

Twenty minutes later the calm is still holding and with a flourish I put my pen down and announce that it is story time! The children watch me closely, fascinated with this process of seeing and hearing a story come alive in their presence. I begin to read aloud. But suddenly there is a knock at the door. Olivia, the school secretary, is standing in the doorway looking at me expectantly, and I realize that it is time for my one-on-one, that is, my evaluation meeting with the principal. How could I have forgotten! ... Olivia has come to take my class to the library, and Mr. Jones will be here soon. The children go ahead with her, and I go to my desk to make a few notes in my plan book before he comes in.

As I wait I feel hopeful that he will see that progress is being made even though it is still slow ... but I hear someone shouting. Sounds like Ossie. I go to see.... Yes it is. On the way *down to the library through one of the classroom doors he spotted a kid who had been "on his case" before school, and he has decided that the time has come to settle the score. He has marched into the classroom (Mr. Smith's) and without warning has started to punch.*

Deciding that Olivia and Mr. Smith are capable of sorting out the confusion, I return to my desk, but I feel so empty. It seems that no sooner do I manage to get these kids focused on something good than an interruption arises. How will they ever learn to sustain a meaningful activity if they are constantly interrupted? It seems that there is little awareness of the kind of privacy that teacher and students require if they are to really accomplish very much.

A glimpse of my working reality must include a description of the children with whom I work and the way I know them. I have a very special class. There are usually between seven and 14 children, and they come to me for language arts and math only. They are in my class because they cannot cope academically or behaviorally in the other classrooms in the school. Some children stay only a few weeks, as I am to prepare them to return to the "normal" classroom as quickly as possible ... and some are with me for the whole term.

There is Ossie. Ossie explodes with anger at least three times every day in the way I have described above, and during these episodes he will damage anyone or anything near him. He has scars all over his face from his mother's fingernails. He does not listen to adults' words. Words do not reach him unless they are spoken very, very gently. He watches my eyes. If my eyes love him and are gentle he can relax and listen, but if I react in any other way to his outbursts his violence just escalates. Usually he shelters behind anger and keeps it close by him on a hair-trigger. Anything can set it off, a look, a word, an accidental bump from one of the other children.

With some positive social/emotional growth happening, it becomes easier to focus on academic learning. I feel that it is so important for these kids to start experiencing personal involvement, or ownership, of this part of their school experience. One day Chris comes up with the idea of having a spelling test. We haven't had one of those before, and I'm not sure where he has run across the idea. Maybe he has seen an episode of Little House on the Prairie, but his face is alight with the idea of having a spelling test, and the other children catch his enthusiasm. So we agree. We choose a set of words and decide to work on them all week and then have a test on Friday. Tests and spelling lists are something that just don't happen in my classroom, so the idea is a bit of a thrill...something new, something different. I tell the children that the words they contribute should be important to them for some special reason. Ollie's choice is Black Stallion. There is a sense of ownership, a sense of fun, and of excitement. I am especially pleased that Chris has thrown off his normal apathy.

This day is also the day of my one-on-one with Mr. Jones, the one mentioned above. He comes into my classroom after the children have gone to the library with Olivia, and looks around. He notices the list of spelling words and the printed announcement that the test will be on Friday. He sits down and informs me that he expects me to run a whole language program in this classroom, and that "there is no such thing as a spelling list or spelling test in whole language. Never." He also says that he is disappointed that I have not done more to "individualize" my program. That means that everyone must be doing something different all the time and that no, several kids couldn't be interested in the same thing at once. Working together is not "individualizing" and therefore not acceptable. What can I say to him? I say nothing. I do not know the words to say what I want to say.... He says he knows what whole language is, although I had never yet been able to get anybody to explain it to me. He has been to at least two workshops on whole language, and is therefore more informed than I am.

How can I explain my gut feeling that these kids need to learn in a social context before they will be able to learn on their own? It's only a feeling I have, an intuition, a sense of direction.... What can I say? What do I know?...Only that my whole life has been a project of being immersed in words and sounds of words and the magic of knowing myself through language, becoming human through the community of language, sharing the project of being alive through language, and that there is something about the socialness of living, about humanness itself, that IS the wholeness in whole language, a drumbeat that must be heard if you are to march in the rhythm of the dance of knowing a symbol as it hides itself in meaning and then reflects our own souls back into our own eyes again and suddenly you know more about being alive than you did before.... He has not asked me why, but he has made an assumption and seems to assume that I have no reason for what I do in the classroom, that I would only have the most superficial of reasons for having a spelling list on chart paper standing in my classroom...I feel that I have been disemboweled. His words bear down on me and roar in my ears like a freight train. I cannot breathe. I feel that I need freedom, the freedom of trust and acceptance, or I will die.... I am so unhappy. I feel trapped.

I cannot tell Mr. Jones any of these things. For some reason my words are frozen inside me as usual. I feel sad, I feel angry, I feel that once again I have not been heard, but I really didn't know what to do about it.... I point out that the words on the list were selected by the children, but I am unable to say that there is a special relationship between those words and these children...and I can't argue with the fact that the words are in a list, and the plan was to have a test on Friday.... I can't seem to find the words to tell him that the list was only intended as a place to hold them because they were important for other reasons.

But I know that he has not heard me. I cannot make him hear me. He may have even decided not to hear me before he came.

So I agree that there will be no more lists. In the morning I tell the children we cannot do what we were going to do ... and they are disappointed, and I am angry.

I am quietly, desperately angry with a system that seems to leave me voiceless.... I prove my competence every single day that I work in this classroom, but there always seems to be one more challenge to prove my competence, and he walks in here seeming to have assumed I am not a professional with reasons for everything I do.... He doesn't give me a chance to tell him that these kids are accomplishing things socially and academically that they have never accomplished before...and I am angry with myself because I cannot speak out in my own defence. I am frustrated with my own lack of knowledge, and my lack of being able to give an informed answer to his criticism. I don't know what whole language is, and I just haven't had the time or opportunity to find out. It's not because I don't care.

You may think I am an unforgivable milquetoast for giving in to the principal this way. Aside from my own difficulty with speaking up, let me share a little more about my "working reality" with this man. During the two years that I worked with him, I saw four teachers give up their careers because they could not stand the pressure that he exerts. The only male member of the staff gets into yelling matches with him quite regularly, and I see other teachers cry every day, quietly in their classrooms, alone. I sometimes cry too, but I am determined that he will never see me do it. I will not let him know he upsets me.... My instinct tells me that if he ever smells blood he will not stop ragging me until he has me down—how does a man like this get away with it? (Does this explain something of my resolve to discipline myself with calm at all times while I am in the school, and thus also the reason for the little centering routine I go through every single day before I enter that environment?)

Shortly after the day the spelling test dies, our school is due for a review by the language arts consultant from the school board. A woman I have never met before comes to visit my classroom. She tours the room, and at the end of her visit she announces that the Michael Knight book she sees on one of the student's desks is "totally inappropriate for this age group," but otherwise she can't see anything wrong.... Again, I am unable to justify to her why it is there—I explain, but my words feel limp to me as they came out of my mouth and I know she is unconvinced.

Once again I am confronted with this assumption that I don't think out what I do, that there is no reasoning behind my actions...and what disturbs me most is that I'm not even asked if I have a reason...the judgment is made without asking, and I feel anything I say is going to be heard as an excuse, not a reason.... Again I feel miserable. Where is the encouragement I need to give me energy to keep myself on the cutting edge for these kids? It doesn't come from their parents, or from my principal, or the consultant. They only seem to want to find something wrong, but the things they find wrong are so silly that they really seem to undermine their own validity...but again I feel that my lack of concrete, research-based information has contributed to my inability to speak up confidently.

A second educator experienced evaluation in a similarly traumatic way:

A Mountain Lake and a Rocking Boat

My experience with allowing outsiders to enter the inner sanctuary of my classroom has been overwhelmingly positive and almost entirely trouble free. Consequently, I have an open-door policy and don't mind visitors, volunteers, student teachers, aides, colleagues, or administrators coming into my room. In fact, I like the opportunity to share my classroom experiences and experience with others. I enjoy answering questions about my teaching style and methodology and like the opportunity to talk not only about what I am doing but about the reasons I have for making certain decisions. I'm always ready for a good debate and don't think educators do nearly enough of it. I believe that I am a good teacher and learning facilitator and have confidence in the effectiveness of the methodology, management techniques, curricular decisions, and assessment strategies I have selected to use. I like and respect my students and am almost always satisfied with the respect and affection they show for me. Therefore, all things considered, the year of the evaluation should not have caused me any undue stress or concern. That, however, has not been the case.

While I did not lack confidence in myself or in the quality of the job I was doing I did lack confidence in the evaluators, the evaluation process, and most specifically in the philosophy and the resulting terms of reference that were established to guide the whole process. After being inserviced on the evaluation process and the terms of reference in the year prior to the evaluation, I knew that "they" had a serious pedagogical problem, but as the summer passed by I had a growing realization that by September it would also be my problem. Nevertheless I was fairly busy with my daughter's wedding and managed to keep these unwelcome thoughts fairly well submerged until the end of the summer when I started preparing for school. Entering my classroom and knowing that this was the year, I decided I had better at least reread the evaluation booklet. Even if I was still determined not to fall into line with the philosophy it espoused it is always wise to scout out the enemy. That was a mistake! I became angry all over again at the absolute stupidity of it all and more determined than ever to resist the vision of education it supported. But amazingly, when I sat down later in the week to write out my plans for the first day of school, I did it according to the expectations set out by the evaluators. My plan book, after all, was to be entered as Exhibit A. Fine, I thought, I can play their game on paper, but it will not change my classroom reality for one minute. That, however, was not to be the case.

Maybe one can write out a detailed lesson plan with objectives, method, materials, and evaluation procedures for each *of the 10 periods in a day and still manage to teach from an integrated whole language perspective. But one cannot do this day after day without beginning to feel controlled and squeezed into a very small and tight box—about the same size and scope as a class period on a weekly timetable grid. You cannot just say you are doing certain things or evaluating in certain ways just to be kept on file for document analysis. You cannot spontaneously welcome student input into themes and activities when detailed units are to be prepared in advance for the whole year. You cannot facilitate the students' learning when you are just expected to feed them your knowledge piece by piece. You cannot be the kind of teacher you are happy to be when you try to play the game by somebody else's rules. You might think that you can be true to yourself, your philosophy, and your principles while operating in a context of deceit. That, however, is not the case.*

Analysis of Baseline Accounts of Teacher Evaluation

The baseline accounts of teacher evaluation presented by teachers in Woodlands School Division were subjected to content analysis, and five themes were identified: They are the *benefits* of teacher evaluation, the *stress* and *conditions* of teacher evaluation, *negative experiences,* with teacher evaluation, and *teacher suggestions* for the process.

The Benefits of Teacher Evaluation

Teachers were certainly not universal in their perceptions that teacher evaluation is beneficial. This undoubtedly is related to the stressful or negative experience characterized later in this section. Those opinions of teachers who saw benefit in evaluation are listed below.

Teacher evaluation is a very necessary part of teaching. Not only does it help those who are doing the evaluation to observe the teacher and their teaching style, but it is also beneficial to the teacher. A teacher, especially an inexperienced one, needs to have feedback on his or her teaching.

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The teacher is able to have an observer watch his or her teaching (someone who should be impartial) and provide feedback.

***

Evaluation is necessary.

1. *To help new teachers develop a "system," a "method" that is comfortable to them.*
2. *To help other teachers with specific problems they may be having.*
3. *To monitor curriculum.*

***

Teacher Evaluation (or The Necessary Evil)

Pros

1. *Professionally necessary to ensure competence.*
2. *Confidence boosting when successful.*
3. *Allows interaction between evaluator/evaluatee.*
4. *Generates professional and personal improvements.*
5. *Opens door for new or different teaching approaches.*
6. *Community (parents, students) trust improves when teachers are guided toward improvements.*
7. *Teachers become comfortable being observed—students too.*

***

What to think of teacher evaluation? Is it something to abolish or to develop? What is teacher evaluation? I decided to limit teacher evaluation to a situation that happens once every three or five years where an administrator comes to one teacher's classroom and observes, then produces a report that will be part of that teacher's file.

There are definitely positive sides to teacher evaluation. For example, it ensures that the teacher makes planning a daily habit and keeps it up. Of course, some teachers would have impeccable plans whether or not someone comes in to see them. On the other hand, there are some who need that pressure to make them work to the limit of their capacity.

For some administrators, visiting a classroom is a job that gets done only when there is nothing else to do. Or it might be that the administrator feels she or he is intruding on the privacy of the teacher in his or her classroom. Teacher evaluation obliges the administrator to go in the classroom and therefore lets the administrators get a better impression of what's happening in the classroom. I believe it is important for administrators to have a good idea of what is happening in the classroom. This will certainly provide information as to who needs help and who can provide help.

Most of these comments relate to teacher development as the major benefit of teacher evaluation. Several other comments relate to feedback, communication, and administrator understanding. Lastly, a cluster of comments relate to accountability. Accountability referred to the administrator actually conducting evaluations, as well as teachers' responsibilities to address curriculum, plan adequately, and teach competently.

The Stress and Conditions of Teacher Evaluation

Despite the benefits of evaluation, one should not forget that the stress level, already high in the teaching profession, can become much higher because of teacher evaluation. Many teachers feel threatened by teacher evaluation. As well, if administrators do not have the interpersonal and technical skills required for teacher evaluation, then the stress of an already sensitive issue is heightened. Here is how several teachers spoke of it:

I am a third-year teacher. I do not believe that enough time is spent observing the teacher to accurately assess the teacher's abilities. Administrators and/or superintendents do not have *the time to evaluate teachers effectively. Objectives cannot be attained, nor even goals set in one or two periods, not to mention methodologies observed or classroom management skills assessed.*

***

In the past evaluation has been seen as a stressful event. For me I felt that the evaluator was like an auditor—looking for any *abnormalities in style, lesson plans, etc. I don't believe evaluation should be like this. Evaluation should be for the* teacher *not the evaluator.*

***

[For me, evaluation has been]:

Nerve-racking.
Intimidating.
Like entering the great unknown.
Job is dependent on isolated evaluations.
Who is the evaluator?

***

Do the words teacher evaluation *strike fear in the hearts of educators? Those words definitely make me stop and recheck my moves.*

Teacher evaluation to my thinking still has, for the most part, the same ring to it as the final exam or report cards. Evaluations sound like documents that are carved in stone and are very final—almost like battle scars. A professional educator goes through years of training and a complex practicum, or in some cases a lengthy internship, and is still subjected to more evaluations.

***

Teacher evaluation depends to a certain degree on the person doing it and the technique used to do the evaluation. A fair evaluation depends on a fair administrator and a fair technique. This makes it tough to accept when it's not done under fair rules.

***

Now do not say, well the administrator was not fair, not all administrators are like that, or most of them are good people. Everyone knows that. But the question is how do you guarantee the fair evaluation and the fair technique? Who decided who is fair and what is fair?

Let's not forget that if the administrator makes only one visit to evaluation, he or she may get a show instead of a feel for the real classroom situation. Plus students act differently when the administrator is there only once. And this acting on the part of the teacher and the students may not necessarily be in the favor of the teacher.

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Again, if there is a conflict for any reason between the two people involved in the process, there will be negative feelings.

***

If you have a personality conflict with the teacher and evaluator it may interfere in the evaluation process.

***

I am a teacher with six years of classroom experience. During the course of my career, my viewpoint on teacher evaluations has changed from something that was a part of the unknown and unnerving to something that I feel is not only necessary, but valuable.

As I have already said, teacher evaluations are necessary. However, to a person who is just beginning a career in education, between the old self-doubts that you felt were left behind when you graduated junior high and your fear of the unknown, just the word evaluation *is unsettling. I can remember thinking that maybe I shouldn't go into education because the thought of being judged by someone who had authority over me was too much for me to handle. I was, however, lucky enough to have excellent cooperating teachers, supervisors, and principals who managed to change my early fears into trust. Their positive attitude toward the work that I was doing gave me the confidence to really believe that maybe I was a good teacher after all.*

The concerns expressed here seem to focus mostly on the issue of *fairness*. Under this issue a number of contributing factors are mentioned, including number of observations and frequency, as well as the implicit concern for skill. Teachers also need to be apprised of the nature of the process of evaluation so as to alleviate uncertainty, anxiety, and other negative emotions. The nature of the relationship is also alluded to in terms of who is the evaluation for, who decides on the *criteria*, and who holds sway if there is a conflict.

Negative Experiences with Teacher Evaluation

Negative experiences with evaluation reported by our teacher co-researchers outnumbered positive experiences by *three* to *one*. Some sample experiences follow, showing the range of concerns.

Although I have had positive experiences with evaluation I know that this does not always happen. While talking to friends I have come to realize that there are quite a few people for whom the evaluation process has been quite negative.

***

My TA was a master teacher. I learned a lot from her. She told me I was doing great until I had a problem with a test when she was away from school. She got very upset. She told me to go back to university and to take something else. I was still young enough. She expected me to be as good as her. She told me that I could not handle the kids and never would.

***

University—I student taught with five different TAs. Each one expected something different. They wanted you to use their style.

***

Superintendent came and watched one class my second year of teaching. Report was good. Third year a principal sat at the back of my room and wrote steadily. Mainly about on/off task behavior.

***

Evaluation in the past (three only) has not been very informative. One evaluation was due to the school evaluation 1988/89. This was done by the deputy superintendent. Basically, this was strictly an observation type of evaluation. A written report was compiled. I was told what my strengths were. An evaluation was also done by the principal that year. It was the same type. The principal wrote notes on everything that went on in the class.

***

Past Evaluations or Shared Horror Stories

Unannounced evaluation—the surprise visit.
The planned-by-the-evaluator lesson—do it my way or no way.
Criticisms voiced during lesson.
Little feedback whether positive or negative—little opportunity for growth.
Missed appointments.
Too long between observation and feedback.

***

Worst type of evaluation was during a total school evaluation.
Reasons—short visit—one time—out of context—already on edge due to administrative pressure about school evaluation—all negatives mentioned—no positives—person outsider—not knowing school policies, politics, etc.—judging for short period of time with no feeling or emotion for student sensitivity.

Useless evaluation:

1. *Evaluator comes in and tries to write down everything that happens—usually missing the whole point of the lesson.*
2. *One-time visit and no constructive help but a great flowery report.*
3. *Strangers evaluating without knowing school, students, or teachers.*
4. *Evaluators who don't spend enough time with teacher discussing what has gone on before and what happens next.*

***

Evaluation has been a very large part of my teaching career. Past evaluation has been both very rewarding and unrewarding. The unrewarding part consisted mostly of my student teaching evaluation. Those evaluating me left me with a negative feeling toward evaluation as a whole. They would evaluate me with very little meaning put into it. For example! "Oh yeah, the evaluations must be completed." They would quickly write one up and have little or no discussion about it. Even though my written evaluations were positive I felt that they had empty meanings. Very subjective.

***

Little meaning.
Allowed for little improvement.

***

Unfortunately, the person who was responsible for handling my evaluation this time focused more on the negative things. For example, from the minute class began until it ended, he would write things down nonstop and assign a time as to when everything happened. Afterwards, we would sit in his office and discuss everything that he had written. This method of evaluation put me on the defensive. I began to doubt whether I ever was a good teacher. As the evaluation went on, I began to feel ill. I lacked energy and enthusiasm. Everyday events were a chore. I had no desire to go into work. Something that I used to enjoy now had become a job and nothing more. I was sure that at the end of the evaluation period, I would be sent packing down the road. I was only half way through the evaluation and we had scheduled approximately five more classes to be seen. I made sure that everything was in order, etc. However, my evaluator began missing the scheduled classes. This also unnerved me and the evaluation dragged out longer and longer. I began to think that he was avoiding finishing the job so that he wouldn't have to tell me that I was fired. This was an awful time in my life. Thank goodness I had strong friends who tried to assure me that I was a good teacher and would have nothing to worry about. Finally, the rest of the classes were observed, and the last meeting to discuss the notes was not as negative. My confidence, however, did not return. I felt shattered. He said that he would write up the formal report right away so that it could be signed and sent to central office. That would be the noose, I thought. I had to wait for two months before the report was ready. The wait was endless. I was sure that it was bad news, but when I read it, it was glowing. I asked him if he really thought that I was as good as he had stated, because I had not been given that impression from our discussions. It was as though none of the negativeness had ever existed. This method of evaluation nearly destroyed my self confidence. It still is not the same as when I first started out. It has been in repair since then.

The administrator has never stepped in the classroom except the day of the evaluation. The administrator has a supply of paper and pens and writes during the length of the period at an extreme speed. The students spend at least the first five minutes wondering what this person is doing here today. Then they proceed to work and pay attention to the lesson. Afterward, the administrator writes the reports and it seems to be a report that shows the behaviors of every student in the classroom during the 45 minutes. Example: "(Name) has put his head on his desk from 11:03 to 11:09," questions like "what is the rapport between the students and the teacher? Did the students learn something that day?" were not con-

sidered important. This makes the teacher feel like a failure and does not compare with a fair evaluation.

***

During my first year of teaching I was evaluated by two separate people. One gentleman felt that a teacher was no good unless he or she wrote a page worth of lesson plans for each grade, subject, etc. The other felt that jot notes used as reminders was more than sufficient to teach from. As a teacher, I fall somewhere in the middle.

If evaluators used a standard for evaluating just the teaching method, and then discussed how each teacher's method for lesson planning worked, my first year teaching would have been less nerve-racking. I taught a split 4-5-6 class in a two-room school and I taught them all subjects. This means that I had to teach similar concepts at different levels, sometimes at different times.

I spent most of my evenings at the school preparing for next day's classes. Because of this, the ideas and concepts were clear enough the following day that for some subjects I would merely write down the page number in the book. For the second of the two evaluators mentioned above, this was great. We discussed what I planned to teach (and how) while he held the text open to that page and I relied on memory. The first of the two under similar circumstances lectured me for an hour on the importance of writing down every little detail. I'm sorry but all that made me was angry.

There appear to be three clusters of comments related to negative experiences: conditions and frequency of observations, and the lack of usefulness of evaluations. Infrequent observations were mentioned a number of times in relation as well as evaluators being strangers or not keeping the context. Missed appointments, surprise visits, and long waits for reports were also noted. Negative criticism and the evaluators assuming that their way was the best way featured significantly. Last, this issue of lack of connection between teacher evaluation and teacher development is noted by comments on lack of feedback and discussion, and also trivial or unhelpful feedback.

Positive Experiences with Evaluation

Some examples of the range of positive perceptions were as follows:

The students are used to seeing the administrator in the classroom; therefore, when the students see the administrator that evaluation day, they act the same as usual. The administrator does not carry anything with him or her. The administrator participates actively in the class by looking at students' work and helping a few students with difficulty. At the end of the class, the administrator leaves and then writes a report based on more than one visit on how the students are taught and what they are learning.

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This teacher had taken an evaluation course at university. He recorded my language, how many OKs. My physical coverage of the room. We talked about the philosophy of education. I felt comfortable with him.

***

The style of our evaluation system at our school is a very rewarding one. Last year was my first teaching year and when I left for the summer I felt I had an idea as to what I needed.

***

The best teacher evaluation I have ever experienced was in.... Reasons—short, often visited with encouragement, and constructive criticism. The purpose seemed to be to help the teacher improve. The attitude was one of trust and faith in the evaluator.

***

I have been quite fortunate regarding teacher evaluation by having positive experiences so far in my career. During my student teaching in university I was lucky to have some very good evaluators (both as cooperating teachers and consultants). Likewise, in my first year of teaching I had positive experiences. My evaluator used the IOTA method, which seems to work quite well. Not only does the evaluator evaluate you, but you also take an in-depth look at yourself and try to see your strengths and weaknesses.

***

[The evaluation focused on]:

What to improve upon and what I was good at. Since I had a negative feeling toward evaluation I feel that this system was obviously a good one since I look forward to being evaluated.

Being evaluated means sharing our ideas and our classes with those around us.

Very objective and useful.

The few positive experiences recorded here relate to the frequency of observation, the process of evaluation as involving a focus on student learning and teaching actions, and being related to improvement through a collaborative process with discussion and suggestions based on non-judgmental data. This provides a context of comfort and trust from which to build.

Teacher Suggestions for Teacher Evaluation

Teachers, needless to say, bearing in mind the importance of evaluation and the personally stressful experiences many teachers have had with it, have plenty of suggestions regarding the nature, roles, method, and conditions for evaluation. The questions arise, then, as to whether and how teachers can be involved in co-designing the process to make it more constructive for teacher development. Some suggestions are noted here:

I believe that evaluations should be conducted by an evaluator who believes that just as a student learns a certain *way, and one way is definitely better than another for that student, so does each individual teacher teach best using his or her own personal method.*

***

I think that it is important that administrators know what is happening in classrooms and that teachers be a little forced to be on their toes. The difficult task is to find fair people to do the evaluation and technique that would be as fair as possible and consistent as much as possible across the country. I believe that students evaluating teachers may be part of this answer. We have done it at university level; it should be considered at lower levels like seven to 12. At least, they know what happens on a daily basis better than anyone else. They can tell if the teacher is organized enough, has a good rapport with students, does fair evaluation, teaches subjects understandably.

***

Feedback should be positive in the sense that even negative comments should be relayed in a positive manner. It is not what you failed to do but rather what you could work on doing for the next class.

The policy should be to accentuate the positive and to work together on those aspects that could be improved. The evaluator and teacher should be working as a team, not creating friction or negative feelings.

***

Evaluation must be carried out in a positive, constructive way that enhances the teacher's ability to maintain enthusiasm and instill confidence to keep progressing. Developing a trust between the evaluator and evaluatee is essential. Maybe only those people who are able to prove that they know how to evaluate should...but does that mean then more evaluation has to be done in order to decide who is able to and who isn't?

***

What I would have liked was an evaluation where the evaluator writes down problem areas, then offers suggestions as to how to deal with them. Even if I'm not having problems I would like suggestions as to different techniques and methods.

***

[The process of evaluation should be]:

clearly outlined to prevent "opinions," i.e., evaluation based on observables.

Credentials: evaluator is trained; has a viable approach.

Teacher understands what needs to fall under guidelines and what can be individual approach—personality vs. professionality.

***

[Evaluations should be]:

Formative not summative.
Informal before formal.
Chance to change and improve before report writing.
Frequent.

***

I have had excellent evaluations, but not as beneficial to me or my students as they should be. An effective evaluation must include, at least, a week of constructive observation in the first semester and again in the second. The evaluator should also sit down with the teacher, plan a lesson or two, and help teach it!

***

In order to evaluate teacher evaluations, perhaps more than one method should be considered. Interviews as well as direct observation should be considered. Overall achievement of class should be considered as well as goals and objectives for a specific class period. Progress checks would be a great idea and help to make evaluation a growing experience. Evaluation should be a positive and constructive portion of professional development. With constructive criticism being given, perhaps more teachers would be open to risking more. These risks would open us to new challenges and answers and in turn professional growth would occur.

***

Evaluation should:
be objective to improve teaching, not a hit list;
be based on realistic student expectations—not all will be on track all of the time;
have no room for hearsay in summative reports;
not be based on one 40-50-minute class;
be done partly by peers;
consist of more intervisitation and team teaching;
consist of more visits by the evaluator (five spread throughout the year with feedback after each one);
avoid comments like "colored paper on bulletin boards faded, therefore it's been up too long;"
make note of classroom climate—do students feel safe?
allow for flexibility in the lesson to meet student needs;
consider evidence of planning but detail should depend on experience;
consider student discipline and control;
include time for pre and postconferences;
allow for different people to evaluate (in the same year) to accommodate personality conflicts;
be more sensitive to the general attitude of teachers with regard to evaluation;
not make teachers panic at the thought of evaluation.

***

As a second-year teacher I am familiar with evaluation and have come away with several observations or beliefs about it.

First, I believe that evaluation should be a process, not a product. Insofar as the actual summative evaluation document or report is important, the feedback provided to the *teacher is equally important. This is true no matter how long a teacher has been in the classroom. Both parties should come away with a clear understanding of what went well, what could be better, and how any improvement might be achieved.*

Following this line of evaluation as a process, I also believe that it is continual. It is not just something that occurs when an administrator sits at the back of the classroom. It occurs at staff meetings, in the hall, and at home when I sit down and try to figure out what went wrong during the day.

In conclusion, I think that teacher evaluation should stress improvement, not competence. To this end, I would like to see programs enacted that would provide teachers the opportunity to hone their skills.

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1. *Evaluation needs are different for teachers on various aspects of their career.*
2. *Evaluation should be constructive. For example, recording who scratched their nose or who stared out the window is useless. We need to focus on what is right and how can we improve.*
3. *What is the purpose? Do both teachers and administrators share a vision?*
4. *Is evaluation for growth or for bookkeeping? Should a teacher stretch and try something different or play safe and use tried and true? What happens if experiment fails?*
5. *A trusting or working relationship is mandatory if coaching is to occur.*

***

The evaluation of a teacher's classroom practice and professional qualities is a process that can be a very rewarding and enriching experience, or it can be a very demoralizing and threatening event. This process is one that requires an evaluator, a person who may or may not be or have been an effective teacher, observe and comment on a colleague's classroom practices. I feel the key factor in determining whether the evaluation process be an enhancing rather than a diminishing event involves the relationship between the evaluator and the person being evaluated.

Regardless of the form designated or specified I feel that evaluation, to be meaningful and effective, must have as its focus the opportunity for honest and constructive dialogue between those involved in the process. In order for the evaluative process to be an opportunity to improve professional practice it must not be limited to ascertaining the extent to which a teacher's practice complies to a predetermined checklist of criteria.

The suggestions of teachers with regard to evaluation cluster under four main headings: Teacher Development as the Purpose of Evaluation, Authentic Classroom-Based Foci for Evaluation, Elements of a Skilled Process of Evaluation, and A Collegial Relationship.

Teachers made many comments related to evaluators being constructive, positive, and making suggestions. They also talked of evaluation as a process, of being formative, of providing for improvement and skill development, and of taking risks. This suggests that regardless of interim needs for accountability or of reports on competence, the real need in the end is to make teacher evaluation primarily serve teacher development.

There was an appeal to focus on what the teacher was trying to do—the teacher's own style—as well as taking into account the teacher's way of learning as a primary focus of evaluation. Similarly, teachers suggested that evaluators focus on nontrivial aspects of actual student learning, behavior, classroom climate, and management. This seemed to suggest teachers want evaluations to focus on what is actually happening, not on some prescribed version of what should happen.

With regard to the process of evaluation, suggestions included providing a clear set of procedures and expectations regarding the evaluation process, using a broader framework than just classroom observation, making visits more frequent, and insisting that evaluators be trained in the skills of evaluative process so that it is consistent across evaluators. Many teachers requested that a variety of evaluators be involved, including peers and students, and that a variety of evaluative tools be used. With respect to actual observations teachers asked for a shared focus, preconferences, postconferences and dialogue and discussion of observed data. They also asked for evaluators to be evaluated as to whether or not they conduct evaluations.

The fourth cluster of comments related to a most important *tone* of the *relationship* between evaluator and teacher. Teachers spoke of the need for a collaborative relationship, of working together, of informality, of shared focus, of dialogue and reflection, and trust.

These sorts of suggestions might be implemented in a deliberate effort to (as one teacher put it) "change teachers' attitudes toward evaluation." A final question posed by one respondent was "How can this process be adapted to suit teachers at different developmental and career stages?"

Summary

The secondary themes that come through the initial categories of benefits, conditions, negative and positive experiences, and suggestions seem to agglomerate around such factors as teacher evaluation being usefully connected to teacher development; teacher evaluation being a collaborative and continuous process; teacher evaluation being collegial and nonjudgmental; and teacher evaluation occurring in a trusting relationship with clear, mutually negotiated expectations.

Woodlands School Division Majestic Junior High School: Interpretation of Results

The Beginning

During the first group discussions at the junior high school in September the researchers made note of the number of times the principal said he would be prepared to try almost anything that any teachers wanted to try to make the evaluation more meaningful for them. In subsequent interviews it was immediately apparent that some teachers were ready and willing to take him literally; several were cautious, yet relieved that he was offering so much latitude; several others appeared confused, seeming not to know much about any alternatives to traditional forms of evaluation, and often asking the university researchers for suggestions or for clarification of what the principal's offer could mean to them.

Also, during this time, the researchers received much unsolicited (but welcome) oral and written information from several experienced members of staff who were not part of the formal case study group. Five people wrote accounts of their experiences with teacher evaluation. Several offered suggestions on ways to improve teacher evaluation. From our conversations it became clear that these teachers had had very unpleasant experiences with teacher evaluation under a previous administration. For them it was still an emotional issue and they welcomed an opportunity to vent their concerns.

The first round of interviews produced evidence of wide variations in teachers' attitudes toward evaluation. Four teachers in the group being evaluated this year were of the opinion that some form of teacher evaluation should occur every year. Two experienced teachers said the only value teacher evaluation had for them was if it could stimulate them to take a few risks and try something new. Most said they were not spending much extra time preparing for their evaluations. Every teacher agreed that the most important reason for doing teacher evaluation was to help people improve. Three indicated a belief that self-evaluation could be a valuable part of a teacher's formal evaluation. A majority felt that students could contribute useful information to the evaluation process.

Six weeks later, every teacher had engaged in at least one exchange visit with a colleague selected at random from all teachers on staff willing to participate. The principal and vice-principal had met with each of the teachers they were to evaluate for a formal planning conference. Both administrators had begun informal classroom visits, and the principal had started a cycle of team teaching one lesson with each of the teachers he would be evaluating.

Every teacher expressed confidence in the relationship that was developing between teacher and evaluator. First- and second-year teachers generally wanted their evaluators to give them more advice about different kinds of strategies, more specific "how to" ideas and suggestions. Several teachers talked about the value of having other teachers on staff who could help them better understand their strategies and weaknesses and whose classrooms they could visit to see how they did certain things. Two teachers said the exchanges of visits were not very productive.

One mid-career teacher talked about her own confusion now that she was involved in a process of teacher evaluation quite different from the emotionally draining experiences of the past.

I think I could get more involved in my own evaluation now that I see what [the principal] is encouraging us to do, but I would definitely need more training. Already [the principal] has helped me see that the best reason for participating in teacher evaluation is to add to my repertoire of teaching skills. I can see that if it's just done for political purposes it's a waste of the principal's time, and mine. But there's still a part of me that says if I have some things that are a source of concern to me in my teaching I'll still probably try to keep that stuff hidden from any evaluators when they come into my room.

Two teachers, while expressing confidence in their relationship with their evaluators, did not see themselves as being engaged in a collaborative process. They talked of the evaluation "being done" to them and they did not appear to know of any other ways of participating in an evaluation.

Another experienced teacher spoke with some excitement about her involvement in planning sessions with the principal, herself, another colleague, and the vice-principal. The four had selected "learning more about cooperative learning" as a goal that would allow each of them to achieve their purposes in teacher evaluation while accomplishing a lot of other desired goals. They had team-planned some lessons and were now ready to start team teaching.

At this point in the year the principal was focused on teacher evaluation and, while he was already concerned that he would not be able to accomplish as much as he had anticipated this year, he was still very enthusiastic. He felt the best things he had done to date were the team teaching activities. He was very pleased as well with the response of some experienced teachers to his invitations to try new things. He had begun sharing with some of his teachers a variation of IOTA (Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities) observation and evaluation materials and offering to demonstrate their use in teachers' classrooms.

His major concern was that many teachers were too passive both in teacher evaluation and in staff development initiatives. He said, "I feel as if some teachers will only do something if I suggest it, or worse, if I tell them to do it. They've all heard me say many times that I want us to share the decision making and the responsibility in this school but some of them just don't accept that we've got to work together much better if we're going to do a better job with our kids."

By the next round of case study interviews most teachers had visited another teacher's classroom and had been visited by another teacher at least twice. Every teacher had been observed at least twice by an administrator. Some more team teaching had occurred and there was a general sense that a lot of work had been done in the area of teacher evaluation, much of which was contributing to greater collaboration; a stronger sense of collegiality among teachers; higher teacher confidence, and higher staff morale. Some teachers, however, still retained previous attitudes to evaluation and displayed varying degrees of reluctance to get fully involved in the project.

In the Middle

At this stage we felt it was timely to analyze teacher interview transcripts in detail. Being in the middle of the process, we felt, would enable teachers to reveal many more aspects of the experience than they might at the beginning (being neophytes) or the end (when particular concerns may have faded).

In examining the field notes and interview transcriptions from our two-day visits to Majestic Junior High School throughout the year, we have been able to identify five meta-themes related to teacher evaluation. Where teachers are most comfortable, where evaluation has an impact on the teacher and teaching is where there are *Collegial Relations* among educators who work in a school, between administrators and teachers, and among teachers themselves. In this particular case this feeling of collegiality is enhanced by the creation of a *Context for Teacher Development* through intervisitation among teachers and by team teaching with administrators. Evaluation, then, takes place as only one constituent element in this whole collective process of teacher development.

Even given this positive context of teacher development, teachers carry with them deeply socialized perceptions and dispositions toward the purposes of evaluation, its processes, and the authority figures who are responsible for it. They also have different perceptions of self related to professional autonomy and efficacy that depend on both self confidence and years of experience in teaching. These factors significantly affect how teachers perceive opportunities for teacher development in the evaluation process. These issues all relate to their *Readiness* to engage in evaluation as part of teacher development.

The specific relationship, of course, that can directly affect the quality of teacher evaluation is that established with the administrator who participates with the teacher in the evaluation process. This specifically relates to the nature of the administrator as person, the way she or he conducts the evaluation and the level of skill and training exhibited. A *Noncollaborative Evaluation Style* usually leads to negative experiences in teacher evaluation, with little impact on teaching. A *Collaborative Evaluation Style*, if practiced consistently over time, is more likely to lead to the teacher opening up to the possibility of teacher evaluation being seen as part of the process of teacher development.

We illustrate these five themes in reverse order to attempt to show their interrelationships, their cumulative effects, and how one might facilitate a positive teacher evaluation process.

Noncollaborative/Collaborative Administrative Style

Most of the comments about negative experiences with teacher evaluation documented earlier were echoed by our respondents. Even two experienced teachers were threatened by the noncollaborative style.

The following excerpt from our interviews confirms this point.

Teacher: I would never have done cooperative learning under [administrator from the past].

Interviewer: Ah, yes, now that's an interesting point.

Teacher: Sue and I would never have taken on something like this under...because you have to depend on the other person. You don't, I mean you have an administrator like he was, you don't do anything that's risky. You would do very traditional type things.

Interviewer: So if that previous person was doing the evaluation how would you feel about this year?

Teacher: We wouldn't do it, he would do the usual come and visit, write down that Johnny was glaring out of the windows, that he was picking his nose, that's what he'd put in his evaluation. That so and so asked to go to the bathroom in the middle of the question.

Interviewer: So would you be worried about him evaluating you?

Teacher: Of course you would, he was deadly, I wouldn't trust the sucker. Like no matter what he said, and to be fair I did get good reports from him, until I saw it in black and white I wasn't going to trust him.

Interviewer: So it would have been a harrowing year?

Teacher: Yes, yes. "This is not your right, this is a privilege." That's the difference.

This type of evaluation appears to have little impact on teacher development. Also, when evaluation is done as a perfunctory routine it is just "endured," especially if the teacher doesn't know what is going on, or it's just a "one-shot" thing.

Another teacher had a slightly different view of the process, but similar impressions of its effect.

Interviewer: If you've been teaching for seven years you've been through evaluation type processes before.

Teacher: Yes. I was evaluated my first year here and I was evaluated at Smoky Lake and Vermillion. I was evaluated at Fort McMurray as well. I taught at those three places.

Interviewer: I see, and when you were here who evaluated you?

Teacher: [A previous administrator].

Interviewer: What was that like?

Teacher: He sat in a desk at the back and he had this grid thing and he just, the whole class, he just made these little check marks and then he did a percentage of something of how many percentage of the students were on task or how much percentage of the time, something like that.

Interviewer: He just did that once.

Teacher: Yes. Actually I think I still have it if you wanted to see it. That's all I remember, I haven't looked at it for a long time.

Interviewer: So did it have any impact on your teaching?

Teacher: No. It had some other stuff on it too about my planning. My books and stuff. Like it was a pretty positive evaluation. I guess it just showed that I was fairly competent or competent or something.

When administrators who have a more collaborative style work with teachers, these negative feelings diminish and there is more likelihood that teachers will perceive the evaluation as helping them develop. Several teachers provided us with corroboration of this point. A few selected responses are reported here.

Interviewer: How do you feel when somebody comes in to evaluate you?

Teacher: I feel a little bit nervous. I'm afraid that I'll do something wrong.

Interviewer: So have those sorts of feelings got less this year as compared to last year?

Teacher: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So you got more comfortable.

Teacher: Yup.

Interviewer: So before he comes in to observe you do you talk with him at all?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So what do you talk about?

Teacher: We talk about what I'd like him to focus on in the observation.

Interviewer: So you know when he's coming?

Teacher: Yeah. I decide which period.

Interviewer: Did he just observe or did he make judgments?

Teacher: No judgments.

Interviewer: What sorts of things did you think you had to do to make your teaching better?

Teacher: I'd like to be more consistent.

Interviewer: So having a set of expectations and guidelines that's clear to you and the kids, and their consequences?

Teacher: Yeah.

Interviewer: O.K. So how can I ask this question? Do you have the attitude that you just had to survive these observations?

Teacher: Oh no.

Interviewer: How do you see them?

Teacher: It's really important.

Interviewer: So he just writes down what he saw?

Teacher: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you worry about your competence at all?

Teacher: No.

Interviewer: You knew basically you were competent and that things were going to be fine. But maybe you could use the experience.

Teacher: Yeah.

The teacher in the following excerpt perceives that she has an opportunity to co-design the evaluation process.

Interviewer: What about other things this year? Have you had a chance to be involved in determining more about your evaluation this year?

Teacher: Oh Greg had asked if I would like him to try a different evaluation method and I think I like the IOTA system as it gives me a lot of feedback, so I asked him to stay with that.

This next teacher did not feel particularly threatened.

Interviewer: When Greg came in and there were these five kids at your desk pulling their hair out, how did that make you feel?

Teacher: Didn't bug me.

Interviewer: No?

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Teacher:	No, it's normal. 'Cause I mean it's tough for them to understand, and they caught on once I explained it again but some kids can get it in one shot and other ones two or three. Demonstrations, like, some of them can't get it from looking at the chalkboard, they have to actually have you do it right in front of them.

Similarly, teachers who perceived their evaluators as being more collaborative did not feel that the relationship was judgmental or hierarchical.

Interviewer:	You didn't feel that he was being judgmental?
Teacher:	No it's the way he presents it, it doesn't seem judgmental at all. He's trying to help you become better, not "well you did this wrong, you did this wrong." He says things in a nice sort of positive sense "well if this happens how do you think that it went?" And then he'd talk about methods that he's tried and other teachers have tried and what he's read about whatever. It was never "do this, therefore, you will be a better teacher."
Interviewer:	So it didn't sound prescriptive?
Teacher:	No.

Teachers themselves felt the administrators in a collaborative evaluation relationship were more able to have a positive impact on teacher development. The following exchange highlights this point.

Interviewer:	What about the actual observations that Greg did? Out of that process did you learn anything about your teaching?
Teacher:	Oh I think so, I think a lot. Just because he was so free to talk to about these things, and you know, I know he's been teaching, I mean, and I don't expect anybody to be a perfect teacher but I know he has a lot of experience, he gave me a lot of tips. Last year I was really concerned, I was in one of the biggest rooms in the school, I mean all this space and I don't like those, I've never been a room type person so I, I remember asking him all these questions and going around and asking people how could I set up my room.
Interviewer:	Yes.
Teacher:	Every time the kids came in they wondered if there was a new arrangement, and just talking to other people and talking to Greg, I remember then I picked this method of just circles and things and I really liked that and having him come in and say, afterwards, say "yes I think that worked." You know he said I've been watching this class as opposed to earlier ones and I think that's really nice for discussion etc., so that was kind of nice to know, that, you know. He recognized that I was trying to do something.
Interviewer:	He was seeing that movement and change.
Teacher:	Yes. So that was that, just basically discussing teaching. We don't always do this but during and after an evaluation just talking back and forth, well this didn't work, what would you do. Even something as simple as picking groups, you know, the way you do it, he came up with some interesting ideas ...

Perhaps one teacher's complete anecdote of the evaluation process might be useful to include at this point. In the previous year she was particularly vulnerable because the process determined whether she would be rehired or not. This excerpt clearly illustrates the effect of the administrator team teaching with the teacher in order to appreciate her classroom lived reality. This practice also made the relationship more collegial because the administrator took the same risks as a teacher. The qualities of collaboration and collegiality come through.

Interviewer:	Last year you said you were very concerned about how well you were doing because it was your first year, because you wanted a permanent job, right?
Teacher:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Greg and Allan evaluated all of you people last year?
Teacher:	Yes, Greg evaluated me, yes.
Interviewer:	What process did he use?
Teacher:	He used the IOTA system and he talked about it in length afterwards. So it wasn't Greg, I think it was just the situation. You know, he was really good about it. Near the end I didn't have as many (concerns). The first one I remember.
Interviewer:	So what were you feelings in the first one? What was it like?
Teacher:	I remember setting this lesson up and thinking "Oh Greg's coming in..."
Interviewer:	Did you choose when he was going to come in or?
Teacher:	Yes we picked a time, the best class, well not the best class but the class you think that you would like to be evaluated on. Like there are a couple that I would never ask him.... He tells what he wants and then you pick one.... And it got better though. Near the end I never even noticed him as much, but still I think that's what, more than anything really bothered me ... just the fact that I noticed him ...
Interviewer:	How many times did he see you?
Teacher:	Four, just about four.

Interviewer: So you said that you were worried about whether you were going to get rehired or whatever. Why were you worried about that?

Teacher: Well I think because we had one person leaving on sabbatical, and one coming back so we assumed there was going to be one position that would have to be cut out, but we ended up hiring another person. But I don't even know if it was all about the hiring part, I think (I was anxious) because I really respect the people that I'm working with and I would like them to respect my teaching abilities.

Interviewer: Did you see Greg teach? You did some team teaching.

Teacher: Yes we did team teaching and it was really good.

Interviewer: With Greg was it?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So, when did you do this?

Teacher: Well, let's see, the first one we did was the IOTA, second was IOTA, and then we did team teaching then he did another IOTA.

Interviewer: So he did an observation and the next time you and he co-planned and taught a lesson.

Teacher: Yes, that was a really nice and neat.

Interviewer: Why was that nice and neat?

Teacher: Well I've never really team taught before. I didn't do it in university ... even on the microteaching you don't team teach.... I know a lot of people that did it in university but I've never done it before so I thought that was interesting. And just the fact like that he worries about the same things, or plans in preparation for the same things that I plan for basically.... The kids responded to him and he was really positive and, you know he was very enthusiastic.... He does a lot of brainstorming. I do quite a bit but he does the mapping, mind mapping, I've never done a lot of that. I've done a brainstorm but I don't take it up further. He did that. It was fun to plan.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel about the process of evaluation?

Teacher: It made me feel better because I saw that he does know what I'm going through when I try things and they don't work. I think that is wonderful.

Interviewer: And you said that he worried about the same things that you worried about?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So it's not as if you suddenly develop a magic formula and you're perfect.

Teacher: Yes and I know he's been teaching for a lot of years.

Interviewer: Sure.

Teacher: So it's kind of like I remember we used to have this phys. ed. teacher, phys. ed. 30 or 20. We ran a mile every second day and he never did. We went outside and he used to, you know, walk, and once when we ran downtown he drove. I remember we were really upset and said "Well how could you judge us by our time?" and he said he didn't. But I think it's the same thing in a sense that, as long you know he's prepared to put himself on the line as well You know that he's a teacher, he doesn't just...evaluate...

Interviewer: Yes. So that resulted in a changing feeling? -

Teacher: I think so, I think that might have been the case. During the last (evaluation) I felt really confident, although it was the end of the year too so that was everything combined...

Interviewer: He did IOTA, then you team taught with him, then there were a couple of other times he came in?

Teacher: Yes. Yes. I like the IOTA because you get to put your input in it too.

Interviewer: Oh you evaluate as well?

Teacher: Well you evaluate yourself 'cause you have a sheet. Are you familiar with that?

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: But you know you have this sheet and you have different things like "a" or "b" whatever, that you can think about, what you think, how you think it was and then you talk about it. You talk about where you were the same and where you were different in some cases. It was nice 'cause we were really (close on our reports...). Kind of interesting.

Interviewer: So did you have any things that were widely different?

Teacher: In the beginning we had a couple of things but after that it was all (about the same).

Interviewer: How did you feel when you saw that he had checked something quite different?

Teacher: Where was I wrong, where did I (mess up?) In fact I think you tend to take it on yourself, he's the evaluator and you must have done something wrong...but he's really good and he suggests seeing it differently from the front of the class and he's at the back, it's kind of different.

Interviewer: So it was as though you just had different perceptions and you then exchanged ways of understanding how you perceived it differently?

Teacher: Yes. So that was really nice too. Generally I feel very open ...

Interviewer: So you all got a chance to plan your own system?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: And this is done individually or altogether in a group?

Teacher: Individually.

Interviewer: Yes. So what did you choose to do?

Teacher: Well I chose IOTA 'cause I really like it, and team teaching 'cause I like that too.

Interviewer: So Greg's going to team teach with you again?

Teacher: Yes. And also he brought in this time the idea of having a colleague's evaluation.... That's what I asked for, like maybe a couple of IOTA, team teaching and then maybe a colleague.

Interviewer: So in addition to this challenge that he's given to everybody which is to get into each other's classrooms, he's also suggested that perhaps you can have a colleague do an evaluation. Instead of just visiting, they do an evaluation?

Teacher: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: And so you've chosen to do one of those?

Teacher: Yes, well, like I said I like intervisitation, and I'd like the idea of being with a colleague.

Interviewer: Would you pick that colleague?

Teacher: I think so, yes.

Interviewer: So you feel fairly comfortable with that whole system?

Teacher: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So if you have to take the key things that helped you become more comfortable with it, three or four things, what things would they be?

Teacher: With Greg coming in here and evaluating me is that what you mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: Well just the one is the fact that he really talks to you about it, he doesn't say, "I'm coming into your room on this day during this period and I'm going to evaluate you on this." You know, I pick the time within the framework, basically I pick the class...and so that part, like, being involved in it, like I'm an active participant. I'm not just a person that's going to be sort of looked at.

Interviewer: So you're part of a process of negotiation.

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So this year ... you are more comfortable with your teaching and with...having colleagues you can share with?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes. OK.

Teacher: The main thing (is) feeling like an active participant.

The process of evaluation means different things at different stages of the teacher's career—*summative* issues such as permanent certification, with job security and growth are most important early in one's career. But what does it mean for veteran teachers? How can it be adapted to suit their needs? Here two experienced teachers talk of how they see their process of evaluation.

Teacher: We know how much we can trust them. So in this school, for this evaluation, we're extremely fortunate. We have someone like Greg on staff that can inspire a feeling of trust in the staff, and you can go out and you can do something adventurous and you can fall flat on your face and you won't be punished for it. Fred was the same. You could go to him with a fantastic idea, he'd taught so many years and seen so much he probably knew it wouldn't work but he'd let you go out and fall flat on your face.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: He'd give you money to support it. And he knew that you weren't going to make it but...(both talking) he would not stop you from trying. Or something else, if something was pretty iffy he'd let you go 'cause he knew you'd bought in and you had to make it work and you'd spend the energy to make it work.

Interviewer: His agenda was not as you'd said, like some other administrators.

Teacher: Yes, yes. And he took flak for us. He took flak like you wouldn't believe. He covered my classes one morning so the kindergarten class could come out to the farm. Karen was the only farm kid in the kindergarten class so she could bring the whole bus load out. He covered my classes all day, didn't charge my absentee or anything so that they could come and we could have a wiener roast and the whole bit.

Interviewer: And Greg and Allan do similar things, like Fred's?

Teacher: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So that this has to do with the people that you were working with. What about the process?

Teacher: What do you mean the process?

Interviewer: What type of process do you use?

Teacher: To evaluate us?

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: It's going to be different from what they use on anybody else because Greg said in one conversation all he was going to say is that we helped (the teacher) initiate cooperative learning in her classes and it seems to be going da da da. She could work on da da da. Like he said it would be more of a report as to what was done and how it went rather than (our evaluation).

Interviewer: So a progress report on innovating this.

Teacher: What else can he do for us. Like we've taught a long time. Isn't it time they do something for us, something that would improve our situations.

Interviewer: So what you're doing is you're making it mean something to you?

Teacher: I think quite often evaluation, I think (a lot of) experienced teachers are like us, they would like something different, they would like something to improve but you have to trust your administrator. And to be perfectly frank you have to have administrators trust you, yes sure. And I think that's the thing.

Context for Teacher Development

Majestic Junior High School is designing its own approach to teacher development that provides a very positive and collegial context for the practice of teacher evaluation. Three subthemes characterize their establishment of a context for teacher development. The school's focus on school-based staff development, the sense of collegiality and support that has evolved, and, besides administrators team teaching with peers who they are evaluating, teachers are engaged in a system of intervisitation.

School-Based Staff Development

Teacher: Well the school division is now into professional development, internal professional development in which each school does their own professional development. When we have some person from somewhere else paid big bucks come in and talk to you, they really don't know anything about your school situation, so I think that's how it started. Greg and Allan, they kind of, they did a few things with cooperative learning and then they started this what they call peer coaching, no they don't want to call it coaching.

Interviewer: Peer consultation?

Teacher: Yeah. Something like that.

There is not only a thrust to work on teacher development collectively but individual creativity is encouraged as well, as we ascertained in the following discussion.

Interviewer: You've got some new courses this year. What are they?

Teacher: Caricatures, animation. Well, we're halfway through the course right now.

Interviewer: What's it like?

Teacher: It's fun. The kids love it. And it's successful because we teach what they want to do.

Interviewer: So are cartoons and caricatures designed?

Teacher: I design them first because there were about 28 kids in grade 7 last year and they were really into that ...

Interviewer: So you design them?

Teacher: And I just decided that this would be something I would like to do.

Interviewer: So this is like, you just designed it yourself and are using it to do the art course?

Teacher: Yes. No-one's been allowed to do that before.

Interviewer: So he's letting you do this?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So there's quite a different attitude?

Teacher: Yes, and some of the kids are taking that one and they're taking the other one, the two separate art courses that they're still taking.

Interviewer: Yes, so you designed this cartoon thing from scratch yourself?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: And the sculpture is the same sort of thing?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: How's that one?

Teacher: Good, the kids are having a lot of fun. It's a noisier course 'cause you're always doing, bang, bang, bang, but they're enjoying it.

Interviewer: Now, are these caricatures locally developed courses or something...?

Teacher: I guess that's what you would call it, yes.

Interviewer: And art's an option in junior high?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So you have more freedom within that?

Teacher: Yes, it's still following the curriculum. I'm doing what they need to be doing, it's just done with a different approach. Like it's more specialized. And because they get a chance to take two of them in a year ...

Interviewer: They get to do things they like to do?

Teacher: Yes. It's better for interest for the kids.

Interviewer: Yes, I can see that, quite interesting, kids are so bored these days.

Teacher: That's why I really enjoy doing this course.

Interviewer: But you hadn't done it before because previous administrations?

Teacher: Wouldn't let me. They were too scared to try something different.

Interviewer: So you were able to take this risk because your administrators were willing to take this risk?

Teacher: Yes. I don't really consider it a risk but, he did, the other guy did.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: Right. And the kids just think it's great, the art enrollment keeps going up really well. That's why I'm teaching art, and I have two other teachers teaching art with me this time.

Collegiality

With all the efforts related to teacher development made at the school level, a strong sense of collegiality and support has evolved. It is apparent in the following excerpt.

Interviewer: So what do you teach?

Teacher: This year I am teaching grade 7 math and science, grade 8 math and grade 7 drama, grade 7 phys. ed. and health and visual arts.

Interviewer: That sounds like a real broad spectrum of subjects.

Teacher: Yes. Almost everything.

Interviewer: What was your major?

Teacher: Phys. Ed.

Interviewer: You teaching any phys. ed?

Teacher: Yes, I've got one class. So that's not too bad, I guess they're just trying to get me into my major, slowly.

Interviewer: Yes, so would you say you felt more confident in phys. ed. than the other areas?

Teacher: Definitely. There's no comparison. I feel that I can go into a phys. ed. class and not have a lesson plan or anything like that and I would still be able to go in there and give a very good lesson.

Interviewer: You've got that craft knowledge in your head?

Teacher: Yes. But the other courses I would feel a little leery going in and just winging.

Interviewer: So since you're teaching mostly outside your major that means you have a lot of preparation?

Teacher: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Very wide variety of courses.

Teacher: And I'm lucky here with the staff, the departments are so strong that I can always get help in any subject so I don't feel that I'm stuck out there alone, I've got a lot of help behind me if I ask for it.

Interviewer: So you've got a nice feeling of collegiality?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: But how many departments can you be in?

Teacher: Quite a few. There's science, math,

Interviewer: Social studies? Phys. Ed?

Teacher: No, no social studies. The visual arts this year is a new course, so that one kind of, I'm on my own, but again like the staff any time that they find a paper or book or anything that they think might help me, it's in my mailbox or whatever with a note saying "I found this, might help your or not, you know, throw it away or whatever."

Interviewer: It's quite rare to find that sense of collegiality.

Teacher: That's what a lot of people have told me 'cause any time I talk to other friends who are teachers I always rave about our staff, the stuff we do together and all the help that I'm getting, and they go "I wish I was there, we don't have that in our school."

Interviewer: Yes, so are there other things around this school that help you develop as a teacher? Other than the visitation process?

Teacher: The help from other departments, other teachers, the other types of resources that other teachers have who have been here for a while and gathered all these things up. Right now for math for grade 7's we're studying fractions. I think they've a different way of teaching fractions in the school so the department head had a meeting showing how they do it, so things like that help.

Interviewer: So how do you feel when you go to the head of the math department and say "how do I do this?"

Teacher: O.K. She's more than willing to help and I can do it my way if I want, they don't stop me from doing that. They suggest an outline, a course outline, and that's what most of the teachers are doing and if you want to do it your way then as long as it fits the curriculum it's fine.

Intervisitation

In our experience, getting teachers into each other's classrooms is a difficult barrier to break through, but once it is achieved it appears to open a floodgate of supportive feelings and learning about children and teaching. Many teachers in Majestic Junior High School confirmed this view, and the following exchange is a fair example of many such confirmations.

Interviewer: Are you involved with this intervisitation business?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: You've done some of that?

Teacher: Yes, with two different teachers.

Interviewer: Yes. Who did you go see?

Teacher: You want their names?

Interviewer: Oh no it doesn't matter, but like

Teacher: A science class and a math class.

Interviewer: Oh I see. And that's going to be quite different context.

Teacher: Oh yes.

Interviewer: So what did you think of that process?

Teacher: Oh it's alright, it's kind of neat going in and seeing someone else with (your own students). When I went into the math class I purposely went into a class that I teach.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Teacher: And that was kind of on purpose that we both are looking at the differences in how they behave and act in the two classes and kind of comparing kids in a way. He hasn't come into mine yet but he's going to, he just hasn't had time to fit it in.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: We're kind of using it to help each other out with comparisons of kids and better ways for seating plans and how to deal with certain kids that are repeat offenders in both classes.

Interviewer: So you've got a purpose and a focus for those visits and observations?

Teacher: Yes. I don't know if that's exactly what we're supposed to do but that's what we're using it for 'cause we felt that's what we wanted it for, that would be best. We could use each other's tips and suggestions on how to handle certain kids, whatever.

Interviewer: That's the math class?

Teacher: With the math.

Interviewer: And the science?

Teacher: The science one was the one we were assigned to do.

Interviewer: O.K. So one of them you pulled out of the hat and the other one you chose to do.

Teacher: Yes. And I kind of just said, "who's got 9F this afternoon?" and he said he did and I said, "O.K. I'd like to come see your class" and he said "O.K." We talked about it for a few minutes and I went and did it that afternoon. We decided what we wanted to look for, like, but after.

Interviewer: Do you feel your partner was stressed by having you in the room?

Teacher: No. He's taught here for a long time, it doesn't bother him at all.

Interviewer: So do you consider that part of this whole thing, teacher development, that process of visiting each other?

Teacher: I like it. I want to go in some more. I only have three preps this term so it's really difficult to be able to do it unless I have someone come in and watch my class. I can't do it otherwise.

Readiness

Although in Majestic Junior High School there was a context of collegiality, teacher development, intervisitation, and a collaborative process of education practiced by administrators, various blocks to seeing teacher evaluation as part of teacher development were clear, as were various stages of teacher readiness to engage in collaborative teacher evaluation. These attitudes, we suspect, are largely the result of socialization as well as absent or poor evaluation practices in the past. We suspect that continuous practice of collaborative evaluation over several years would help to ameliorate this problem—but, as we can see from this study, it will not be an easy hurdle to overcome.

Despite the climate in Majestic, two of our research group remained quite negatively disposed to evaluation even after a significant number of months of collegial activity. Even when the process was clearly communicated while the researchers were present, they still couldn't perceive and hear the collaborative tone of the enterprise. This observation is not meant to be judgmental but is made to illustrate how far back we will need to start with some teachers to develop trust and collegiality.

Most other teachers, however, could engage to some significant degree with the process, although there were various signs that some were more ready than others due to a number of factors, including degree of expertise with the subject matter they were teaching, age and experience, self confidence, attitudes toward authority, willingness to take risks, and perceptions of the purposes of teacher evaluation.

Purposes, Taking Charge, and Teacher Development

Although the collaborative action research project early in the year had emphasized that teacher evaluation was part of the teacher development process, as shown in the previous section, and that it was collaborative in nature, some teachers' perceptions were still colored by previously socialized views of the process. One teacher who had been doing exemplary individual development in her own classroom still did not link teacher evaluation to that process. She still saw evaluation as "keeping you on your toes" and as "providing a piece of paper as a reference for a new job." She had not seen or decided, therefore, to link evaluation to teacher development and what agenda she had for teacher evaluation. This excerpt on an interview with her captures the point.

Interviewer: Is this process useful?

Teacher: The evaluation?

Interviewer: How can you make it useful to you?

Teacher: Well, I suppose it keeps you on your toes, makes sure that you're doing what you're supposed to be doing. As long as you are it doesn't really matter but for some people I think it's a smart idea.

Interviewer: Have your got any special things you are going to do as part of this evaluation process?

Teacher: I personally don't have a clue as to what things to do.

Interviewer: No?

Teacher: I mean, all I've ever had is just someone come in and watch and write things down, so.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: And 9, grade 7 I think need the basics, they need all the stuff in there still, so.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: And they don't know yet if they like painting better, or sculpture better, or cartooning better. They may think they do but I don't think they do. In grade 7 they get a little taste of everything and in grade 8 and 9 they can choose.

Interviewer: So I wonder how we can make this evaluation process useful to you and these new courses that you've designed?

Teacher: Me too. I don't know. I just look at evaluation as getting that piece of paper that you can use when you want a new job or a reference, whatever.

Interviewer: So this is how you might make this evaluation process useful to you, getting Greg to come in and look at some of those? What sorts of questions might you ask him?

Teacher: I haven't really thought about that part yet.

Interviewer: Well I'm just wondering. I know you haven't really thought about it yet, but I'm wondering what sorts of, say in, caricature, cartooning, what things might you have him look at. I'm just curious.

Teacher: I don't know yet, I haven't really thought about that. I'm not sure. I just might get another teacher come in and do, record, whatever. Some people are doing that. I might do that.

Interviewer: Do you see that as more useful?

Teacher: It doesn't really matter who comes in, I don't have to have another teacher come in, I don't care if it's Greg or not, but I've still got like another viewpoint on it.

Interviewer: And is there any special part of your teaching that you're focussing on?

Teacher: With evaluation?

Interviewer: Yes. New skill or?

Teacher: Not really, not yet, we haven't really picked a focus. I kind of want him to check out the new classes, the new courses I made up.

Interviewer: So you've got some ideas about what you want to do with that?

Teacher: Well, a little bit, not much though. Like I say, we have to get back together again.

Blocking/Unblocking

Several teachers, when asked to describe their perceptions and feelings about evaluation, even in the context of the collaborative action research project, spoke of "not being bothered by it" or "not caring" because they just "blocked the evaluation out." Here is an example of that.

Interviewer: So, Greg coming in didn't worry you or threaten you?

Teacher: No. I don't care, people come and walk into my class all the time, in and out, in and out.

Interviewer: How did it compare to student teaching? Better? Worse?

Teacher: It doesn't bother me, I really don't care. I kind of block them out and don't really notice that they're there. I just do my normal routine and.

Interviewer: So you don't put on the dog for evaluating?

Teacher: No, the kids notice if you do.

Interviewer: How does he make you feel when he comes in to evaluate you?

Teacher: I don't really block him out entirely, I just don't focus on it, I don't worry about it, it doesn't freak me out.

Given a positive collaborative and collegial climate, though, teachers eventually feel comfortable enough to unblock and allow the relationship to begin, even though the initial feelings are a bit scary. This teacher provides evidence of that change occurring.

But I remember I was talking about something and the lesson went really well but I was really nervous, and at one point I looked to the back of the room and he was just sitting there, unsmiling. I was taken aback, 'cause you know it wasn't even the fact that he wasn't smiling, it was the fact that I noticed him and I never noticed him before. It was nice I had this knack of forgetting all about him. When I talked to him he said good things and things I could work on and I really, you know, I learned a lot about stuff through evaluation, the way that they have it set up.

Fear of Authority

When teachers frankly examine their feelings regarding evaluation instead of blocking things out, one realization that might occur is that they have a deeply rooted fear of authority that goes back in their lives. The following excerpt focuses on this fairly common theme.

Interviewer: Yes. Is Greg a threatening guy?

Teacher: Not really, it's just the principal title I guess. I feel a little nervous and, again I always have this bad feeling that any time I'll get called to the principal's office, even though I know I haven't done anything wrong, I keep thinking, I'm always thinking about the bad things. It's something that's been drilled into my head. Each time you get called down to the principal's office it's something that you've done bad.

Interviewer: So, well, but, have these feelings got better over the last year?

Teacher: No.

Interviewer: Still come back?

Teacher: Even though I know that basically he's just going to try and help me out, and it's not going to be that awful it's just.... I don't know what it is. I try to stay positive, don't worry about it, but it never happens.

Interviewer: So are there any ways that you can think of as to how you can make this evaluation process work positively and usefully?

Teacher: Not really I think the only thing is I just have to get over my fear of being evaluated and like I said, after the post-conference I get a lot of information back on what I'm doing, I think it's helpful. So that part of it is excellent, it's just getting worked up the night before.

Contextual Factors

A teacher's readiness to engage in collaborative evaluation is influenced by various contextual factors such as subject matter background and the difficulty of handling particular classes. Most of our teacher respondents talked of classes they hoped the evaluators would understand and the additional worries they had when being evaluated in classes in which they did not have extensive subject area expertise. The following interview helps illustrate this point.

Interviewer: So, when it comes to this issue and process of teacher evaluation and teacher development, I mean it's nice to have that context of support but then in your case you've got all these different subjects that you maybe or maybe don't have the background for.

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: So how does that make you feel? Like if somebody came in to evaluate you or observe you in phys. ed. would there be a difference between that type of occasion and anybody coming in to observe you in one of these other areas?

Teacher: Definitely. I think just simply because I feel more comfortable in my phys. ed. class then I probably wouldn't even notice I was being evaluated and with worrying about, like my math or science, I'm sure that I'd be thinking at the back of my mind am I supposed to be doing this or that.

Interviewer: So it's a matter of confidence.

Teacher: Yes. I'm getting a little bit more confident with science 'cause the program that we use in textbooks, the materials are excellent I think, everything's laid out for you and I taught grade 7 science last year. You know I'll be reading over and going Oh yes, O.K. I remember this from last year...

Young teachers who are developing their confidence and teachers who need a permanent job feel especially vulnerable, as this teacher does, but the approach created by Majestic Junior High School can help teachers get beyond this.

Interviewer: So this is your second year?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: And you're saying it's different this year than last year. How can you expand on what that means?

Teacher: Well first of all...last year I was more worried about whether I was going to be hired back again. It was a lot easier this year in a lot of ways you know in terms of I know more about the kids, I know how to respond to them more, not perfectly, obviously, but more in that way. I know the staff better and know the evaluation procedures better than I did. I mean last year it was really clear and everything but I feel, I think I feel more comfortable with them. Like yesterday I had a student teacher come in and last year I would have gone "Oh Oh"...

Interviewer: Just worried about having somebody in there watching you.

Teacher: Yes, yes. It was weird because I was taught with a partner but in university I never worried about that. I had my video-tape and it never bothered me. I went out into the schools and did my student teaching, never bothered me at all having to come back here. And then last year I found it really did, probably because I was worried about getting hired back again and everything.

Interviewer: It's real now.

Teacher: Yes it's real. So I kind of found that a little disconcerting at times. But this year I find that with Greg, the principal, I'm becoming more relaxed.

The Barrier of Intervisitation

If a collaborative evaluation process is to involve intervisitation and team teaching, it must be understood that despite teachers' isolation and need for support, their fear of being seen, their fear of criticism, and their sense of vulnerability still make it a challenge for teachers to visit each other. This is a real block that all school-based activity has to break through. Many teachers reported experiences similar to the one noted here.

Interviewer: You talked about the sort of lessons you were doing and which ones would be appropriate, that type of thing?

Teacher: Yes. And we sort of had a post conference afterwards. But one thing is, it's nicer because last year there were ten new staff members and about six or seven of those were first year teachers and we planned on coming in. We'd say, "Oh we'd like to go in" and we didn't.

Interviewer: Why didn't you?

Teacher: I don't know, well for one I was downstairs, like sort of isolated. It's really weird because down there there's sort of the science lab and then the library so you're really isolated. I'm upstairs now so it's easier but I think the general feeling.... I mean everyone was open to it last year but we just never did it.

Interviewer: Do you think you avoided it?

Teacher: I might have, maybe.

Interviewer: I mean all of you, I'm not talking just you.

Teacher: I might have personally though I think because I, like some (people's) houses they would probably come to mine. Maybe that's at the back of my mind 'cause I find, it's starting to be better now. It's starting to be like I was in university, I don't mind people coming in. At the beginning of the year even though I remember teaching the class and kids really, the 8's...

Interviewer: The famous grade 8's.

Teacher: Yes, the famous grade 8's.... But it was weird because you know you have that sense that if someone walked in your classroom and things aren't going well you go, "Oh is it my fault." But I find that ever since they kind of broke that barrier of having us to into each others' classrooms.... I don't know if Greg talked about it, but he set up a challenge where we had to have people in our classrooms...and I think since he did that it's become freer. I know yesterday I had two people say in the morning..."Can I just come in and watch?" Which worked out nice, it was nothing really, really.

Collegial Relations

The overall meta-theme that subsumes all other themes in our data is that of providing a context of positive intercollegial relations. This was best explained in the case of Majestic Junior High School by two veteran teachers who were to be evaluated. Besides illustrating how many of the negative attitudes and emotions might diminish as teachers gain experience, it also raises the question as to whether there could be or should be different processes of evaluation for teachers at different levels of development. Alternatively, it presents a model that we might try to develop for teachers at all levels.

This particular project shows how teachers can take more responsibility for teacher evaluation and work in a collegial way with administrators—but we must remember these teachers and administrators have been part of an active successful school-based development group for two years!

Teacher: So I thought that I would like to be doing something that would benefit me as I have ten years after this year left to go and I would like to be up.

Interviewer: How many years are you short?

Teacher: This is my twenty-fifth.

Interviewer: Well, we're on a par, this is my twenty-fifth.

Teacher: Yes but you've had an easy life.

Interviewer: Laughter.

Teacher: So I want to do something that would benefit me, being totally selfish. Connie and I went to Medicine Hat this summer and did the cooperative learning workshop and Allan's into cooperative learning and Connie was brave and started right away in September. Well I was waiting for my kids to become perfect before I started so now I'm really reluctant because they're not perfect so I thought that if Connie and Allan, Greg and I could work together and they could help me get cooperative learning going with my grade 7's I would have something to work at. I'm the type that needs a change or something new every once in a while

	to keep going, and I twisted her arm and I talked to Greg and they seemed to think that, (it would be alright).
Interviewer:	So you're going to try that? But, was it your turn to be evaluated?
Teacher:	Yes.
Interviewer:	Both of you. So you knew that it was coming up.
Teacher:	Every so many years you have to face that.
Interviewer:	Yes.
Teacher:	And what are they going to say. We've both taught for so long, they know. What are they going to say so it should be something different. Something that will, maybe selfish, benefit me.
Interviewer:	And something that will help you do whatever you want to do, change the way you teach.
Teacher:	Yes. And when we do the cooperative learning he'll obviously be able to see that we're both competent, we're both organized, that whatever he has to fill in on his little form will be answered.

The Remainder of the Year

From about the end of November until the end of February somewhat less activity was associated with teacher evaluation in the junior high school. The experienced teachers working on cooperative learning felt they were actively involved because they continued to visit each other's classrooms and engaged in one more session of team teaching with one of the administrators.

In February interviews, six teachers said no evaluation or not very much evaluation had happened since November. One second-year teacher said, "As far as I'm concerned, it's not occurring at all."

In other ways, the February visits gave evidence of teacher tiredness and an administration seeming to be bogged down in the day-to-day running of the school. First, many more students in and around the principal's office required administrators' attention than had been the case on any previous visit. Then there were more instances of teachers wanting to say critical or uncomplimentary things about other teachers, or students, or parents. Next, the principal himself expressed great frustration at being unable to give even modest amounts of his time to teacher evaluation and staff development because of such things as student discipline cases, meetings with parents, meetings with the school board, dealing with teachers in personal or professional difficulty, budget concerns, and district professional development initiatives.

Perhaps the most telling evidence of all of a temporary loss of teacher enthusiasm was revealed in teachers' responses to a question they were asked during their interviews. The question was "If you had to rate your teaching effectiveness right now on a scale of 0-100, where would you rate yourself?" Eight teachers responded as follows:

Experienced Teacher	80
Experienced Teacher	70
2nd-Year Teacher	65
2nd-Year Teacher	65
Experienced Teacher	65-70
Experienced Teacher	80
2nd-Year Teacher	60

Following the spring break, the administrators made a conscious effort to devote more attention to teacher evaluation. The principal in particular was able to set aside his pessimism of a few months earlier and spend more quality time with most of the teachers in his evaluation group. More importantly, the principal seemed to come to terms with what he would be able to accomplish and what he would not be able to accomplish in the remaining 11 weeks of school.

Several teachers talked about being "done" and "not yet done" when asked how their evaluations were progressing. Most teachers sensed that classroom intervisitation, team teaching, and all other aspects of the evaluation process except those that would contribute directly to the content of a written report would be forgone. Several teachers acknowledged that they would have preferred their evaluators to spend more time with them during the year, especially providing them with more feedback.

In their May interviews teachers were asked to provide summary statements about their teacher evaluation experiences. The great majority of those statements were positive and many that contained a negative tone were in effect requests to have more of the good things that happened. As an example, most teachers felt the visits to other teachers' classrooms increased collegiality and contributed to teacher development, but several teachers said there were not enough opportunities to do this. Similarly, most teachers who experienced team teaching with an administrator thought it was an excellent way of developing the trust and mutual respect essential to successful evaluation, but most teachers felt it did not happen often enough.

Teachers' positive comments included the following:

2nd-Year Teacher:

You've got to respect [the principal] for everything he did to make this process more valuable than it has ever been.

2nd-Year Teacher:

I'm not afraid any more. I have confidence in the fairness of this evaluation and I know I've been more involved this year than I was last year.

Experienced Teacher:

It really is a growth experience with the right administrator.

Experienced Teacher:

Each teacher should be encouraged to take more responsibility for professional growth and, in turn, make more of a contribution to their own professional evaluation.

Experienced Teacher:

This is the best year I've had in 23 years of teaching. At least I feel as if someone in authority has given me credit for something.

2nd-Year Teacher:

The best thing about this for me was when we had time to talk about my teaching.

2nd-Year Teacher:

The best thing this year was the positive relationship I had with my evaluator.

Experienced Teacher:

It was a real boost to my morale. It let me know I was doing okay ... I'm not so bad.

There were a few openly critical comments, but only a few. One second-year teacher said "We started off strong but it all kind of petered out." Another second-year teacher expressed frustration over broken appointments.

When asked to explain how the evaluation process could be made more beneficial, all but one teacher had at least one suggestion:

Experienced Teacher:

Spend more time working on new skills. Arrange more visits and more visitors, and try to get more teacher-to-teacher cooperation.

2nd-Year Teacher:

It's hard to know how it could be better.

Experienced Teacher:

I would like to have more time to talk after teaching about each lesson.

Experienced Teacher:

I would like more opportunities to work with a mentor teacher in planning and preparation. Also, I need more time to talk with my evaluator.

2nd-Year Teacher:

More peer stuff. More mentor teachers for both the younger and the older teachers' benefit.

2nd-Year Teacher:

Discussion groups and time for these small groups to get together.

Experienced Teacher:

More peer contact. And do the evaluation for just one whole month every year.

Experienced Teacher:

We need to find ways to include a lot of information that students can provide in our evaluations.

Experienced Teacher:

Experienced teachers need chances for "rebirth." That's what happened to me this year. It should be possible for more experienced teachers to share what I experienced.

Near the end of the year the principal was invited to write down his "Thoughts from the Principal's Desk" on the topic of teacher evaluation. This principal had engaged in team teaching with every teacher in his group and had been quite disappointed at certain times throughout the year when he was unable to spend as much time with his teachers as he felt he should. He is knowledgeable of both theory and practice in the area of teacher evaluation and quite firm in his conviction that educators must explore more productive ways of influencing the overall quality of teaching and learning in public education than those most typically associated with traditional views of evaluation and accountability.

Teacher Evaluation—A Principal's Point of View

As a principal, I find the process of teacher evaluation to be time consuming and somewhat stressful for both the teacher and the evaluator. My five years of experience as a school-based administrator and my research into teacher evaluation has led me to believe that the actual benefit of the teacher evaluation process, considering the time and stress, does not compensate for the effort.

I believe that most of what is done presently in teacher evaluation is an accountability activity that may have some value as a confidence booster for boards, parents, and Alberta Education, but it does not adequately address the concern that teacher evaluation should improve teaching and learning in the classroom. The current procedure of visiting teachers a few times in a year is also artificial in relation to classroom teaching. In order for teacher evaluation by a school-based administrator to be of assistance in the professional development of teachers much more time would be needed for the process and a lot of formal report writing should probably be eliminated.

However, the present reality is that teacher evaluations are mandatory and thus, in order to carry out the policy but at the same time provide as much professional development as possible, I have tried to use the following techniques. I use the IOTA format. I know there are many other techniques that can be used but the IOTA does provide some basic characteristics that are essential for nonjudgmental discussions *about teaching. The form allows the evaluator to record observations of activities in the classroom in behavioral terms and provides a focus of discussion in the pre and postconferences. The conferences are the most important part of the process, because it is in these discussions that the background and future trends of the classroom activities can be incorporated into the "snapshot" of the classroom that you get from one visit.*

I also include in my rounds of classroom visits at least one team teaching experience, and often two or more. The teacher and I meet, plan, and deliver a classroom lesson. We then discuss the lesson as colleagues. This may not be perfect, as I am still the teacher's supervisor and must write an evaluation report. However, by doing this I try to demonstrate to the teachers that I too am a teacher and I am willing to take risks by modelling my teaching in the open. I have found that this does lead to more honest discussions about teaching.

I do not evaluate all teachers in the same way. Less experienced teachers seem to need and ask for more direction and structure, so I make more classroom observations with them. For more experienced teachers the process is more flexible and can include observations, peer observations, intervisitations, and informal discussions. In all cases the experienced teacher has input into the evaluation process. I know these methods are not all that are available but the main restriction I encounter is that I don't have enough time to work as effectively as I would like with up to seven teachers in one school year.

This leads me to my final thoughts. If we truly wish to assist teachers to develop professionally, I feel that we cannot hope to do so with the current teacher evaluation structure. Most teacher evaluation practices act as a disincentive to most teachers to engage in professional development. I feel that a lot of professional development is better achieved through teachers working with peers. The process should be school-based, ongoing, and collaborative. Currently we accomplish some professional development through some teacher classroom intervisitations, some team curriculum planning, and some team teaching. All of these have some benefits and are worthwhile, but I feel strongly that until we are able to group teachers into teams, teaching together at the same time, and provide them with planning and collaboration time during the work day, we will never appropriately address the full range of professional development needs of teachers.

Tamarack School District
Interpretation of Results

For Tamarack School District we documented, through periodic interviews with administrators and teachers, three sub-projects. They included the system of evaluation for probationary teachers, the administrators' view of evaluation of experienced teachers, and the new system for evaluation of administrators being developed and used.

Evaluation of Probationary Teachers

In the case of Tamarack School District we felt that the process of evaluation of probationary teachers merited examination and documentation. It evolved out of seven or more years of careful action research, training, and development, including collaborative action research with one of the researchers.

The opening part of this section is a record of what the policy of the school district states with regard to the evaluation of probationary teachers for the purpose of job contracts and permanent certification and the process that is supposed to occur. This representation of policy and process has been gleaned from interviews conducted with central office personnel, from policy documents, and from materials provided to teachers. The second part of this section describes how this process was experienced by teachers. Data were obtained from interviews with four teachers who had just completed requirements for permanent certification using this process. One was a female ECS teacher, who trained in that specialization at the University of Alberta; one was a female elementary French teacher from the University of Calgary who was teaching high school core French; a third, a male teacher, had majored in social studies at the University of Lethbridge and was teaching grades 9, 10, 11 social studies; and the fourth, another male teacher, had trained at the University of Alberta in science education and was teaching chemistry to grades 10, 11, 12 as well as coaching basketball.

Policies and Intended Practices

In Tamarack School District, the process for teacher evaluation for the purposes of certification is comprehensive and continuous, taking place over a two-year period. It initially involves school-based administrators, including perhaps department heads in high schools, and finally central office personnel at the end of the probationary period. Each probationer may be involved with at least two and perhaps four evaluators and may have engaged in up to 12 or more cycles of formal supervision prior to certification. At the end of the first year, subject to job availability, the decision is made as to whether the probationer will continue to be employed. This process takes place in a comprehensive orientation and training system at the school district level, the school level, and sometimes the department level. Some teachers may opt to take formal training and engage in project activity in supervision and peer coaching, which is offered during each academic year. New teachers are given a comprehensive material package describing to the school district policies, procedures, and practices when they are hired. These materials include a book entitled *A First Year Teacher's Guide For Success*. A local group of teachers is writing their own version of this book. The materials closely outline the policies and practices regarding teacher evaluation in a step-by-step way—specifically, the procedure for evaluation of probationers, the nature of the supervision process, roles, expectations, and the like. Expectations regarding teachers' duties, planning, and all other matters that are evaluated, including materials on teaching excellence and research on good teaching, are included. Support sources and services that might be used to assist in teacher development are also outlined.

Late in August this material is examined during a two-day new teacher orientation session using a workshop approach. Training is given in planning, timetables, and other district matters. As well, new teachers are engaged in writing personal beliefs and goals relating to classroom climate, management, and teaching styles, and how they might reach these goals. This process is done individually and collectively; the results are documented for future reference. In this way, new teachers are given a chance to understand the culture of the school district, its policies, practices, and expectations, both in general and in relation to teacher evaluation. As well, teachers are given a chance to begin to clarify how they will work in that context. A similar process occurs at the beginning of the school year relative to the school context. Most schools have their own individualized orientation plans.

All new teachers meet as a group several other times during the year for specific purposes. In October, prior to the first report card period, they attend a workshop that addresses student performance and assessment and the whole issue of reporting student progress to parents. In February they review the goals they set earlier in a process of self-evaluation and address agenda items related to concerns and difficulties suggested by the group. New teachers are able, then, to share experiences and provide support for each other in their efforts to become skilled teachers. At this time they also review evaluation procedures and how the process is going, and where school-based support and mentorship is coming from. In the workshop context they plan for the remainder of the year and what they need to do for their second year.

By January 1 of the first year at least one evaluation is done and by April 30 the school-based administrators are required to have finished two. At this point collaborative appraisals of teaching development are completed by the evaluator and teacher and a decision is made whether the teacher should be given a continuous contract, another one-year contract, or nonrenewal for the second year. In the second year the school-based administrators continue to do analyses of teacher evaluations, and then, usually after Christmas, a central office person will do a series of evaluations leading to a decision about permanent certification.

To varying degrees, depending on availability of the evaluator's time and teacher's timetable, each teacher can negotiate when the evaluator will observe. A large proportion of evaluators' observations are linked in terms of time, frequency and class, with some attempt made as well to see a variety of classes. Even though there are overall performance criteria that will be observed, teachers have opportunities to relate observations to their overall agendas, style, and specific teaching skills on which they wish to focus. Generally, a structured supervision approach is used with orientation meetings, specific pre and postconferences and, at the end of the series of observations, a longer summative conversation. The emphasis is on collaboration, two-way communication, and positive reinforcement for teacher development. Data are gathered and shared in a nonjudgmental way which encourages the teacher to make decisions about his or her own teaching. The evaluator, however, may make suggestions that the teacher might consider.

Data gathered for each observation are quickly shared with the teacher, and the teacher receives a written report quickly following a series of observations. Teachers are at liberty to comment on and validate such reports.

Prior to engaging in the culminating cycle of evaluations for the purpose of permanent certification, the central office evaluator meets with the teacher to provide a specific orientation and a reexamination of the procedure and data gathering instruments related to performance criteria in the orientation package, and other more specific instruments available for more specific purposes that the teacher might wish to use.

Teachers are asked to submit lesson plans, unit plans, and their personal statement of beliefs related to teaching, goals, teaching style, their efforts in meeting pupils' needs, and areas of other accomplishments. These documents are examined and discussed with the teacher in conjunction with data from observations and they contribute to the final report. In this sense the teacher participates in an active way in the process of evaluation, through a process of reflection and self evaluation. Documents and preobservation conversations provide a context in which the evaluator is able to view what the teacher is trying to do. The teacher also is clear about what might be observed.

When the central office administrator does permanent certificate evaluation, and frequently when school-based administrators conduct series of supervisory cycles, relatively long postobservation two-way conversations are conducted. These relate to the whole scope of teaching—past, present, and future. Although the data gathered in observations has been nonjudgmental, at this point suggestions are enunciated and discussed by both teacher and evaluator as to what next steps in teacher development might be taken.

In order to make effective use of time for the mass of documentation in this process, the District Assistant Superintendent has developed a computer-based system of formula writing based on teacher performance criteria, which speeds up report writing while leaving ample room for describing the unique features of each teacher's style and development. In this way final reports that might have taken up to several days now can take five to six hours.

Whether new or experienced, teachers who show significant deficiencies that persist over time are able to coplan individualized programs of assistance that involve a variety of potential mentors, include coaching, peer consultation, and other forms of professional development.

The Evaluation Process for Probationary Teachers as Experienced by Four Teachers

Generally speaking, the perceptions of four teachers who were interviewed in depth for the purposes of this study corresponded in almost every respect with the stated policy and intended practices outlined earlier. This is in stark contrast to the conclusions derived from the questionnaire data from the larger TEPI study in which perceptions of administrators and teachers differed in significant ways.

The data were interpreted for themes and patterns. Five subthemes related to the major theme of *Collaborative Evaluation Process*. They included *Interpersonal Support, Reflective Understanding of the Whole Teacher, Continuity, Affirmation and Self-development*, and *Fairness*. Three subthemes of *Collegiality, Teacher Development*, and *Training* related to the major theme of a *Context for Teacher Development*. Three subthemes of *Clarity and Fairness of Policy and Practice, Orientation, and Communication*, and *Readiness* contributed to the major theme of a *Cultural Ethos of Teacher Evaluation*.

Each of these themes is illustrated in turn with frequent reference to the teachers' own words.

Collaborative Evaluation Process

Interpersonal Support

The process of supervision used by the school district involves collecting nonjudgmental data on what is observed in the classroom and providing the teacher with the opportunity to make judgments about what they mean. Although administrators do have agendas for what they would like to gather data on, teachers are given the opportunity to direct the focus of observation as well. Each observation is done after a pre-conference and followed by a postconference. With a highly sensitive and personal issue, that of professional evaluation, it is important to have administrators who are well trained and teachers who are informed as to what is going to happen so that both can participate fully in the process. Providing the teacher with a context in which to feel comfortable, positive, and supported, wherein negative criticism is not practiced, is of paramount importance. One teacher saw it as follows:

And he'd go through the whole pre-conference, post-conference and everything for the times when he was actually writing things and taking notes. The evaluations that he did when we came to sit down for our post-conferences—it was specific things that I had been saying or doing or moving. Everything was very specific, so I knew exactly that he was listening and he did know what I was doing . We talked about it afterwards and it was a really good feeling, you could see that he was very supportive too.

It was always that way, it was never, "You're not looking at the kids enough," or something. It was never in a bad way. It was always very supportive and yes, in a questioning way like, "Maybe you could try this," or "Would it help if we had another helper in here?" you know, those kinds of things.

People here who do the evaluations don't come in to criticize you. They come in to give you some constructive criticism to help to make you a better teacher. So I think that any evaluators that would come in and say "Maybe this would help," or "Could you, would you maybe try this?" would make it much easier for teachers to be able to take than someone coming in and saying "You've got to change this, you've got to change this." Of course that's kind of a no, no, you wouldn't respond well, no one would respond well to that.

Informality was revealed in this study as a way the process can be personalized.

As one teacher said,

I liked that because it was informal. I didn't feel like I was being tested at that point. It was more of a sharing. He went through his comments and if he wanted something clarified he made the point, otherwise he'd just tell me something that he'd seen or he'd really enjoyed, and why.

Another teacher commented,

Every time I never wanted it to happen until it happened and then I really enjoyed it while it was going on. Yes, it was really good. What I did in the end when he came in I sort of made him a part of the class. I had a really good class to do it with and they really got a kick out of it. And I think he enjoyed it and the kids really enjoyed it. And he came back actually, there's sort of a joke between us and the class. He came back later on to check up on, like he was a kid to do something, and he'd check up on the kids.

This informality and the personal relationship may be helped if the evaluator drops in now and then without doing formal observations, as this teacher noted.

I think that that really helps, I mean not always to come and write things down either but more just to pop in sometimes. Like we would invite him down to come for our birthday snack or whatever it happened to be, or maybe we were making pancakes that day or something, but even just those kinds of little visits, the kids get more used to him, I get a more comfortable feeling to have him in the classroom too.

In fact this feeling of *interpersonal support* seems to be the basic platform from which new teachers derive an important disposition toward *growth* rather than a regression to fear of authority. This teacher clearly thinks so:

I think perhaps going back to the idea of support and also a sounding board for ideas is very important, and I think with my feelings that I didn't feel like I was being evaluated, but rather supervised.... The people that came, they were more concerned in developing me as a teacher and so that support and sounding board for ideas would be the thing for me.

Another probationary teacher picked up on this interpersonal support.

There's a positive thing. They like to point out the things I was doing right, but I would ask. I would point out things that I felt I had trouble with and they would say well you might want to try this, or you might want to try this. It was always positive, they always, you know, give you positive feedback.

Continuity (Frequency and Gradualism)

In order for a teacher evaluation process to make a difference through the establishment of a trusting relationship, the total number of observations needs to be beyond several infrequent observations over two years. Our four teachers were seen anywhere from 12 to 15 times during two years, by three or four people including vice-principals, principals, department heads, perhaps an administrator from another school, and central office personnel. The total number of observations increased if they were involved in the district's ongoing peer coaching project. Although they were seen by a variety of people, it was considered a strength because of the variety of ideas generated. As well, teachers could be sure they would experience a consistently common structure in the process, which was nonjudgmental in nature and which included pre-conference and post-conferences and conversations within which telling would be at a minimum.

Typically, evaluators would leave the new teacher to learn and understand the context in which they worked for a while after beginning teaching—with collegial support systems available. After a while they might drop in informally from time to time. Somewhere in the middle of the first year an in-school administrator would work through a cluster of observations with the teacher, perhaps another toward the end of the first year. Maybe another in-school person might conduct the second cluster. The second year might have a similar pattern, moving gradually to a cluster of visits by a central office person for the final evaluation for permanent certification.

Teachers appreciated this movement from close peers—in-school evaluators—toward senior in-school administrators, then to central office personnel. By the time the central office personnel came in teachers reported they were thoroughly experienced with the process.

Generally, when an evaluator worked with a teacher ample notice was given, mutual expectations were negotiated, and a cluster of closely linked observations were arranged. These often included several observations of the same class over one to three weeks to appreciate the range, rhythm, pattern, and development of a teacher's teaching, plus an observation of another class and subject to give a sense of the variety of assignments in which the teacher was involved. Data gathered generally were *immediately* shared and discussed after each observation. Final reports on each linked cluster of observations were shared with the teacher, usually within one week.

(Opposite practices of few and infrequent observations done in a perfunctory or routine manner, missed appointments, lack of immediate feedback, and delayed final reports, as recorded earlier in this case study, lead to devastated teachers who feel extremely negative about evaluation and the evaluator, and who might even regress in their teaching skills).

Reflective Understanding of the Whole Teacher

The previous descriptions deliberately focus on the classroom observational process, but this is not all there is to initial teacher evaluation in this district. This takes place in an effort on both the teacher's and evaluator's part to *understand* the teacher as a whole professional.

At the outset teachers provide the evaluator with their plans and materials, which are studied in some depth. Teachers are also invited to write their philosophy of teaching or describe their teaching style. (If they had participated in the school districts orientation sessions, they already had written an earlier draft version of this.) As well, they are asked to write about what they do, what they have achieved, what they hope for. It is in this context that the organizational meeting, pre-conferences, and observations take place. The post-conference very often is a long conversation about teaching in general, what the teacher has done and wants to do, and an exchange of ideas about what might happen. It is a joint reflection directed toward understanding the teacher's evolving development as a teacher. One teacher described it in this way:

He wanted to look through my books to see how I planned and my outlines and sort of long term outlines of what I was going to cover in the course, and short term, that kind of thing. And he was interested also in my evaluation, you know, how I was going to gather marks for the kids. Not a lot of depth on that but just basically, you know, "What's your course break down and have you thought about why?" He wanted to make sure that I'd looked at the program of studies and the curriculum guide and included them in my plan.

Another teacher had a similar experience:

And the thing I found was he wanted to look through my books while he was in the classroom, he went through my binders and looked at stuff. When my other evaluator did it, he just took my binders for a week and he was very thorough, you know, in what he went through.

Yet another teacher commented upon the evaluator's thoroughness.

I gave him all of my plans and term plans and things like that so he could take them home and he studied them over a weekend and had a look to see if...my plan was continuous and kept on not just jumping from thing to thing. So he did that as well which really was kind of nice too 'cause then he knew more about what kinds of things we had been doing.

This teacher saw value in self appraisal both for himself and for the evaluator.

Like I feel now that maybe he knows me a little better than he ever did before just from that interview. In normal circumstances I would never have the opportunity to sit and talk to him like I did about things that I'd done, and achievements, and dreams and desires and hopes and goals, all those kinds of thing. But from the perspective of personnel-wise I would think that it would do him good to use that evaluation process to get to know his staff better, and to get to know their various weaknesses and strengths, you know and, maybe things they're interested in that he hadn't even thought of before.... I would hope that that kind of evaluation process would give that to him too.

The self appraisal, an important part of the district's belief that good evaluation is more likely to result when evaluators know more about the whole teacher, does not come easy at first to all teachers, as this teacher revealed.

I found it hard to do the self, the self-evaluation thing. I went and talked to other people about it too to see what, well, how in detail did they get 'cause it doesn't say, it's very open. I felt a little silly at first doing it, you know, and I was a little annoyed that I had to do it 'cause I didn't really have the time. But I found that sitting down and doing it was good for me. It makes you sit back and reflect and think about things. When you put it all down on paper, where you get your teaching strategies and your ideas from, and why, and all the things that make you up as a teacher, it makes you feel good. You know that you've got all these things...

Boy, you know I guess I'm OK. Like I really do work toward this and here's why. It makes you stop and think, but that was a hard thing to do. I talked to the teachers about it a lot of them said, "Oh I'm no good at that, I never do, I just put a couple of things down." So then you had to sit and think well now am I going to be somebody who just slips a couple of things down for the sake of having it done or am I going to go all out and really think of things that I could put here.

All four teachers, however, were positive about what resulted when they took an active role in the evaluation process. The following conversation demonstrates this point.

Teacher: With him it was more like, "I'm looking at you as a teacher, as an individual and I want to know everything I can. I have a limited amount of time to get it in but let's see what we can do." So with the hour and a half, I found that to be a lot more of an opportunity to really express a lot of stuff. I came away feeling quite satisfied that I'd done my best. I'd put my best foot forward. I had said everything I wanted to say. I had gotten enough feedback from him that I needed in order to make me feel more confident in my job.

Interviewer: And you described that as informal and, what's the word, mutually satisfying conversation about teaching etc.

Teacher: Yes it was more, that's it, it was more of a conversation than it was sort of like, you did this, you did that, check, check, you know, which was the format that was taken earlier on. Mind you I think though the check, check, checklist stuff is probably less threatening because I don't know that I would have been ready for the interview that I did with—right at that time, you know, so maybe as a growing process, a stepping process, it was better to have a checklist format the first time and not too much thought about. You know, you think about that later.

Interviewer: So that generally speaking, would you say the process of supervision and evaluation has had some impact on your teaching?

Teacher: Yes, I think maybe the one area that was maybe not negative, but my planning, I think that I'm a good planner but also at the same time I need more feedback on how to do it more effectively. I think that's helped me, definitely. And especially just to be able to talk to an evaluator and give me ideas exactly and perhaps also to ground your philosophy of teaching.

Interviewer: How does this process help you ground your philosophy of teaching?

Teacher: Perhaps when you're teaching you don't really know why you do it. You're doing it but you don't really think about it that much. But to be able to talk about teaching with somebody and to realize that you are doing that and then to think about the rationale behind why you do it. To think that out and to verbalize it with somebody else...

Interviewer: Sort of makes it explicit, intuitive?

Teacher: Yes, yes. It's intuitive and you do it as a teacher but do you think about it and talk about it and discuss it with other people at the same time. As teachers we can't really go out and talk to people on the street about it, have an understanding, as we could with an evaluator or a peer.

Affirmation, Improvement of Teaching, and Self-development

The impact of this collaborative process of teachers' evaluation appears to have three values. First, regardless of how confident or skilled the four probationary teachers were, they needed some authoritative person to confirm that they were in fact doing their jobs competently. This need for and experience of affirmation seemed to be important in and of itself, besides providing a base of confidence from which to examine what might need development. The following brief exchange captures this phenomenon.

Teacher: Well it was very positive. I didn't seem to be doing anything wrong, so if nothing else it made me feel confident that I was O.K. in what I was doing. I needed that because I was so nervous about teaching at the high school level having never done it before so it was good for me to get that kind of feedback from him that, "You're O.K. kid. You're doing the right stuff, and things are going well."

Interviewer: What did you learn about your teaching from this process in the two years? You mentioned the sorts of things that you learned in your first year especially from your students?

Teacher: I think again it was just a case of feeling very good about what I was doing. Initially I needed it from a more, sort of in-house expert, having the vice-principal who I deal with and who I had already met and already worked with a little bit, having him tell me, "Yes you're O.K. You're doing fine, this is good, I like what you're doing," this was a good boost, but then to actually have the superintendent come in and say, "Wow this is really good. We really like what you're doing," then I felt "all right, I'm O.K. I can handle high school" and I think that up until then I was still sort of nervous about whether I was actually being effective as a high school level teacher.

Another probationary teacher explained it similarly.

Interviewer: Can you recall any particular things that you got out of those processes in terms of your teaching?

Teacher: Again (the central office administrator) was very positive. I think that you don't always have to have something wrong, like that was something that he told me, there's not always something wrong. Sometimes it just needs someone to come in and tell you that you're doing a good job, and that really helps teachers. I always have parents and the children of course tell me if it's good or if it's bad, or whatever. They let me know, but it's sure nice to hear sometimes that you're just, you're doing O.K. and someone realizes it.

Interviewer: Can you remember specific times or instances and what sorts of things you tried or what things you learned on particular visits?

Teacher: Yes, I have to think first. I guess my feeling about evaluation was I wanted to always know if what I was doing was O.K. so I didn't go ahead and make something different for when the evaluator was coming. I would just do what I was doing so I always wanted to know the true picture of, if what I was doing was O.K.

Interviewer: And did it give you a more explicit sense of who you were as a teacher?

Teacher: I suppose the security end of it, you know...you always wonder. You know you can give out evaluation to your students and you can walk around and talk to your colleagues...but until somebody with authority or power says to you, "Yes I like what you're doing, you're O.K." I don't think you really believe it, you know. You're always searching for that, somebody to say yes.

Interviewer: Validation?

Teacher: Yes exactly and well at least I am, maybe not everybody needs that. I know I do.... It made me feel a lot more secure in the high school.

So regardless of the specific question related to the impact of the process of evaluation, the first response was always affirmation. This, we suppose, from an administrative point of view equates with the basic level of accountability. But when pushed further as to impact it was clear that positive feedback reinforced certain behaviors and indeed extended their exploration. Teachers usually were asked to identify for themselves areas they wanted to change. What teachers appreciated, then, were suggestions offered as alternatives or possibilities, not as prescriptive solutions. It appeared to enhance teachers' sense of confidence and efficacy, as this conversation shows.

Teacher: He would give suggestions on this. "Oh maybe you could try this next time," or "this was really wonderful, I like the way you did this," and so it was a really good experience for me.

Interviewer: Can you recall some of the lessons that were observed and were there any particular comments or feedback that had impact on what you might do as a teacher?

Teacher: My teaching methods are very varied. I use as many different ideas as I can. I don't try to put special things in my lessons when people come, I just want them to see what I do on a normal day. So during the day I have a variety of things, group work, and you know, individual tasks, and I think that was one thing that the evaluators appreciated. At the same time they gave me ideas of how to develop them even further and I don't think that there were any negative comments at all, more supportive. They would say, "A very good idea, what would happen if?" and those are the type of things that I appreciate. Although I do it for improvement I don't mind "try this" a little bit. But the things that were brought up weren't negative at all.

Clearly, all four teachers were convinced their evaluators were a valuable source of ideas and support. This selection from one of the interviews demonstrates the point well.

Interviewer: In the process did you feel you have a choice, or involvement, anticipation, control of those sorts of things?

Teacher: Especially this year when the administrator came he asked if there was anything that I wanted to have viewed, if there was an area that he should pay attention to. That's important as well because as a teacher you can't identify weaknesses in yourself as a teacher, so that gave me a chance for him to look for that as well. So in that way it did help with feedback and input to the process.

Interviewer: Do you remember some of the things you might have suggested?

Teacher: I think one of the areas that I asked, especially my department head to look at, I do many activities and I sometimes I wonder if I connect my activities to the concept of the material that we're covering well enough. So we do the activity, but is there a logical link and understanding linked to the ideas that we're trying to get across? And so that was one thing that I asked to be observed as well.

Interviewer: So you went beyond the basic stuff like time on task and the questioning and distribution of involvement and so on?

Teacher: Yes. I think those things are quite standard and I do expect those to be observed but I think it's those other areas that I identify as perhaps my weak link.

Interviewer: And what did that information tell you about that? When you collected data on it?

Teacher: It gave me some ideas on how to improve, especially the activities, specific ideas on how I could stretch that activity and relate it more to the content. So that just from experienced teachers having some idea of how they could do that, that helped definitely as well.

Interviewer: So this evaluation procedure takes place within a context that's quite positive and helping in respect to development generally?

Teacher: Yes, yes. It's, the word, the word evaluation is almost, a misnomer for what occurs. It's more, I like the name coaching and supervision because for me that's what it was. Obviously they have to ensure legally that I'm doing my job but I didn't feel that it was that. It was more encouraging me to develop at the same time. So it was back to my comfort level. I didn't feel like I was being evaluated, like a driver's examiner that sits besides you with a checklist. It's not like that.

Interviewer: Apart from your interest in relating activities to the specific content of the curriculum, were there other areas in your teaching that you changed or modified? Directly or indirectly as the result of the process of supervision or evaluation?

Teacher: I think indirectly, especially this year, I knew that the evaluators were going to be looking at my planning and I wanted to make sure that from now until the end of the year I would be organized in my planning. I didn't want to become a teacher that walks in and does things off the top of my head. I wanted to have a record of that and so I did that indirectly. I think that was probably one of the biggest things that evaluation caused me to do.

Although they were neophyte teachers, the supervisory relationship was such that they could take risks while the evaluator was there—using them to provide feedback. That's trust!

Interviewer: Do you think that process gives you more of a clear sense of direction for your own teaching now?

Teacher: For the future now?

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher: It's the confidence thing again. It makes me confident that I'm O.K. with what I'm doing and that I can continue and that taking risks is O.K. I had a new, brand new thing that I was doing in my classroom that he got to see and it's been very risky. It started this semester and I wasn't sure how it would take on. This system that I'm using is giving stamps out. I have little French stamps on papers and once a month they get a paper with squares on it and every time they speak French to me they get a stamp. So if they say, "Hi how are you," "Good morning," "Goodbye," "What's the weather like," anything that hasn't got to do with our specific question and answering time in class, they get stamps for it. At the end of the month we add them all up and they make stars and put them around the room, the whole bit. And what I was trying to do was to get them to use their French more, and to actually speak rather than just when I made them do it. When the evaluator came in I wanted him to see what he thought of it, how he thought it was working. He went around the room to help some students with some seat work. This girl had her hand up and he said, "My French isn't great but do you trust me? I think I can handle your question." She kept her hand up and said "Well, yes, I trust you but I want a stamp!" So he came back and said, " Think it's working." But it's neat to see and it's been an interesting process to see how that went through. I'm always trying to dream up something to get them to speak so this year it was stamps. I've got to evaluate it at the end of the semester yet and see whether I want to do it again but it was an interesting exercise. And he came in and he was very supportive. I didn't feel threatened by him, that he would, you know, sort of chastise me if it didn't work. I didn't feel like that at all. I felt like that he was kind of intrigued that I was trying to do something that was kind of weird that was trying to get these kids motivated to do something else. I think he was just sort of having fun with it. So in that way I've felt a little more secure so that now next year if I want to try something else that's a little weird—Oh and I'd stand on the chair and play Simon says with the class while he was there! I'm sure he thought that was a little off the wall, but they responded to it and they liked it and so I was able to, to be me the way I normally am with my classroom while he was there. That really was me! The first evaluation that I did there was no way, I was very reserved, I did a few things but nothing really off the wall but this time I really felt secure that I could, I could really show him things that I do in the room on a regular basis that I might not share with too many people because they're a little bit, they're intimate. You know, you have a class and you play Simon says with them and they're all grade 11's, you shut the door and you play Simon says, you know. But they all have fun with it and they're trusting and they know each other and they know you and they don't feel threatened. You bring a stranger in the room and then you try and do that.... I wasn't sure how it would go over and it went over great!

Interviewer: That's an interesting point you make, you know, how much can we be ourselves as teachers, you have an evaluation and the key things there is the relationship you feel with that evaluator.

Teacher: Right. For sure. Like now I wouldn't hesitate to have him in my room. I was nervous at first that he was coming because I had no idea, but now I feel very good about it. If he just walked in out of the blue it wouldn't bother me because I would know that I would have his confidence in me that I'm doing a good job and that I'm teaching the way he would expect me to teach, you know.

The most encouraging evidence that this approach to teaching evaluation is worthwhile was where teachers could move from a need for affirmation from significant professional others, to an openness to alternatives, to a mutual process for improvement but, most importantly, to taking charge of their own evaluation, exploration and development. As this teacher did, they made important connections between evaluation and teaching.

Teacher: The thing that I got the most information was from the kids responses to me. I found those evaluations really useful. You know, what kinds of things did they find helpful and not helpful in the class. I found that interesting because the administrator had a book in this office full of evaluations. I like to do evaluations myself at the end of the year on my class. So I could go to that book as a resource and choose different sheets that I could pull to administer to my classes myself. I'm allowed access to those myself any time I want.

Interviewer: So they were sort of encouraging you to engage in self evaluation?

Teacher: Yes, sure. Here's how you can do it. Here's a little system that's already been developed. When you're teaching, it's really hard to come up with those things. You don't have the time. It's something you can work with. Maybe you want to change a couple of things here and there. I found those to be really helpful. I've used them every semester. I really like them because then I can choose what kind of information I'm looking for back from different classes. I'm always trying something new so it's nice to see what the kids thought of it.

I was able to sit and go through them, and it gave me an insight into the grade 9 mentality. What they would consider to be interesting, what they would consider to be boring, and

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what they would consider to be a headache and a half. It gave me some pointers for the following year. I found that I did revise my program a little bit. For my grade 9 level I revised my language arts program a bit from those evaluations.

Interviewer: Common sense plus the way you taught?

Teacher: Not so much the way I taught, no, I didn't make too many changes on that, they liked pretty much the stuff I was doing. It was just the content, and maybe the way, or the timing of presenting it. I found that I rearranged my week a little bit so that I had more focus. We have a language arts component and I didn't like it myself and the kids didn't like it either. It was too choppy, so what I ended up doing last semester was changing it to one block. I put it all together in a block and it worked wonderfully.

And so I think it was nice to get that. It was sort of a rounding out for me 'cause now I feel it gave me the confidence this year to say to my colleagues.... We've got two people who've retired this year and so two new teachers are coming in to teach languages. The four of us have to sit down and decide who's going to teach what next year.... I very bravely said that I would like to teach a grade 12 level. I've never done that before, but I feel now like I can do it, you know. I'm anxious to attempt that, so it's given me the confidence to go and to try something a little harder 'cause it was difficult in the beginning, enough, just doing 9, 10 French which is where I started. This year I got 11 and now I'm doing grade 12.

Interviewer: So it's encouraged you to take risks?

Teacher: Yes, yes I would say.

Interviewer: In that sense it's helping you, it's developmental?

Teacher: Yes, and it's also given me a sense of a little more security within the board and within the school as well. You know I'm only a temporary contract. I'm hoping like mad that I'm back on again next fall, but I feel like I can make plans for the future now. I'm not so much focussed on just getting me through this semester. I'm working with another teacher now where we're making test banks together. We're looking ahead at a new French program that's coming into being in the fall and planning on how we can work together to implement that better. We are looking at a few changes in the courses we're teaching now so we can sort of iron out and have more of an even spread of workload with each one. I'm about to concentrate more on a future plan than just an immediate self plan.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Teacher: So I found that with that evaluation it gave me the confidence to feel that I could move out into the school a little more, I could extend myself a little more and feel like I could be involved in other things that weren't just necessarily my classroom.

Fairness

In retrospect, the process of evaluation was considered to be fair by all teachers interviewed, as this excerpt reveals.

Teacher: I think they make sure that you understand the guidelines before, I think that's important you understand what they're looking at and I think that takes the fear element away and I think they've worked hard at developing criteria that's very fair. They try to keep the personal side out of it so there's no disagreements or anything between the evaluator and the person, so that way it's very fair.

Interviewer: What about the reports themselves? When you read them do you feel the same way about those?

Teacher: Definitely. Especially the ones that were done for my certificate. I thought they reflected what I had done and were quite detailed and managed to look at all the areas we had talked about in the pre-observation cycles.

Interviewer: Well the discussion was over two years ago, so? So in this whole process did you think it was fair?

Teacher: Yes, I really did.

Context of Collegiality and Teacher Development

The second major theme was a context of collegiality and teacher development whereby new teachers are involved quickly with their peers in specific projects. One of the four probationary teachers missed some early introductory sessions but was quickly assimilated into the peer group.

> *I muddled through and I managed to meet people on staff who were very helpful in that respect and if I ever had questions I could go to the administration and ask and they certainly would give me the answers. It was just that I missed the orientation, so what I did was, the fall, this past fall when I was back on staff again, I went to the orientation sessions, so I sort of did everything after the fact.*

The orientation of new teachers involved experienced teachers as well. The group met a number of times during the year and provided peer and mentorship support, something that was certainly appreciated by all the probationary teachers we interviewed.

Teacher: So, and then you would talk about it afterwards and so it was a lot of just discussions,

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which was really nice because all the teachers there, the majority of them were first year teachers... first year to the district or first year right out of university too. There are a lot of questions and concerns. It was really nice to have that bonding time and to know that there was a lot of other people out there who had maybe the same concerns as you. You could really get a lot more ideas with that kind of process, the brainstorming and the questioning and everything.

Interviewer: So did you meet again as a group during the year?

Teacher: We sure did, actually a couple of times. We had it at the beginning, at the end of August, then I think we met November and then in February, or something like that. Just to keep us in touch. Each time they would bring in something different. The first time it was more evaluation and what was going to happen to you. The second time, I think we talked about report cards. The third time we talked more about student evaluation and end of the year kinds of things. It really gave you a chance to know what they were expecting. They were supporting you and not just saying we want this. They would give you all the information that they wanted you to get.

Each new teacher was involved in some sort of professional development project with colleagues. In the following conversation, the ECS teacher explains her involvement.

Teacher: I've been to see a few other ECS classes in the district. One in my first year and two this last year, just to go and see what other kinds of things are happening around. When I taught grade 4 we did a lot of team planning. All the grade 4's would get together and plan a unit. I did the social studies unit C on Quebec. We did it district-wide. There are about seven or eight of us teachers and we got together two or three times to devise an actual unit plan for the school district. Other than that here in the school itself the grade 4s got together to work. As for ECS last year, there was a teacher who was teaching the afternoon class, and I was teaching the morning class, so we did a lot of team planning. We ran the same program but just separate classes.

Interviewer: So you feel then that you've had opportunity and support for your development as a teacher then?

Teacher: For sure, for sure, and I'm on the PD committee for our school as well. We get to decide what kinds of things happen in our school. If people would like to go places we allot a certain amount of money to people to go. I'm involved in that too. So definitely there's a very supportive environment. Actually the vice-principal was the other grade 4, I taught half-time grade 4 and he taught the other half of the same class.

Interviewer: Oh I see, yes.

Teacher: So we did a lot of thing together too. In ECS we have a buddy, grade 4 buddies, and we get together about once a week or so to read and do little special projects.

Interviewer: So you're in and out of each other's classrooms?

Teacher: That's right.

Interviewer: That part, do you think that helps with your disposition toward evaluation?

Teacher: Well, you don't worry when they come in. I feel very comfortable with any of them walking in at any time because they've never, they've never been mean to me.

Interviewer: Never been negative or judgmental or...?

Teacher: Exactly, exactly, always very supportive.

Another of the beginning teachers was involved in something quite different.

Interviewer: You mentioned the teachers who had written an evaluation book.

Teacher: I had been involved in compiling a book I guess you would call it, on teaching strategies, and that was done with another teacher from our department and then some other teachers from the school district. That was part of the professional development. And then professional development days...we'd taken a few days to look at developing a curriculum that was more student-centered using some new resources that we had found. So all those ideas we could say were targeted to developing teaching techniques.

Interviewer: And so you worked with other teachers from your department on that?

Teacher: Yes, and other schools as well so that gave us a broader base, more reference to draw upon as well.

As well, several of the teachers joined the ongoing peer coaching project that trains teachers in strategies of supervision and coaching and enables pairs of teachers to collaborate more fully with each other. One young teacher saw his involvement in this way:

During that time I was involved in that coaching and supervision program, during the first year, so that provided me some ideas about supervision cycles and how you prepared for that as well. Coming from a background with (a supervision program) I think that, those two things added together, gave me a good idea about what coaching and supervision and evaluation is all about. So I feel very comfortable when *people come in my classroom. It doesn't faze me at all I don't think.*

Another teacher had a similarly positive view of the impact of that project.

Teacher: Well first of all I took that teacher coaching, peer coaching and teacher evaluation course.

Interviewer: Oh you did that did you?

Teacher: Yes I did that in my first year and so that sort of introduced me to how it was going to be done, so I was very comfortable after I'd taken that. I think, I recommend you take that before you get evaluated.

Interviewer: And as part of that did you do any peer supervision of somebody else?

Teacher: Yes, we teamed up with another teacher.

Interviewer: OK. And you visited backwards and forwards with each other?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: How many times did you do that?

Teacher: I think I went into his class twice, and he came into mine twice, that's right.

Interviewer: So you reckon that that whole project really helped you a lot, accepting what happens and why it happens?

Teacher: Yes, I think it did.

A Cultural Ethos for Teacher Evaluation

The school board has a clear policy for teacher evaluation that has been developed over seven or more years of action research and development. It is based clearly on a positive and supportive view of teacher development. All administrators and 90% of the teachers have been trained in its procedures and skills. An ongoing peer coaching project consistently engages new and old staff in staff development projects, ongoing training with a pronounced emphasis on teaching and learning.

New teachers are oriented to the school district in a thorough and active way, examining what research has shown is good teaching and evolving statements of their own philosophies, styles of teaching, goals, and intentions. As well, specific efforts are made to familiarize new teachers with teacher evaluation policies, procedures, and practices at the district level, the school level, and the department level if appropriate. Each evaluator begins working with a teacher by reviewing expectations and procedures again. The teachers we interviewed commented extensively on the thoroughness of the process.

Interviewer: OK. Well can you give me a run through of what sort of orientation you have generally within the school district and within your school. Particularly with respect to teacher evaluation and, therefore, teaching. What expectations are there for teaching, and what you thought about that? What you did about that?

Teacher: At the end of August prior to beginning teaching I had two days of orientation here with the other new teachers in the district. They would go over the policies regarding what was expected of you as a teacher as well as how you would be evaluated and it was made clear that before the end of the year, you would have one evaluation done by an administrator at the school level to determine your continuing contract status. So that was made clear from the very start. Within our department and in our school there was orientation and also some explanation of that as well.

A second teacher recalled the initial orientation.

Interviewer: Did you have orientation from your school district when you first arrived?

Teacher: Yes we had a two or three day orientation. I can't remember exactly how many days it was now. They went through a lot with us and they've actually improved some things since. They've come up with a whole booklet of information which I think is really valuable for the first year teacher.

The teachers were aware that the process extended into the level of the school.

Interviewer: Now when you arrived here at the school they go through various orientations, can you recall what your perceptions of those were, specifically in respect to teacher development and peer evaluation?

Teacher: Right, right. I think at the time I was feeling, "How come I'm here right now? I should be in my classroom getting things ready." In hindsight I feel it's very important because I had an idea of what was going to happen. You knew you were going to be evaluated from the first couple of months by your principal. In the next couple of months they would come in again. You had an idea of what was going to happen to you, which really helped.

But you've got the whole idea that they wanted to make sure that they had the best teachers available. That's the feeling that I got. Because that's why they were checking to see how you were doing. They wanted to make sure that you weren't sinking yourself under so far that you couldn't get out either. They wanted to make sure that you were happy and satisfied so that they knew that you were doing a good job and they would check on all that.

Interviewer: So the sense was one of support then?

Teacher: Definitely, definitely. It was definitely supportive. Not, "We're coming in to see you and you'd better have everything perfect," but more the thing that, "We're coming in. We want to help you. We want to make you a better teacher, we want to make sure that everyone, your children are getting the most out of it." So it's more, it was very, very supportive.

Interviewer: So how did they do that with respect to teaching, teaching strategies and techniques and this sort of thing?

Teacher: How did they?

Interviewer: How did they, you know, give you a sense of what they think is good teaching?

Teacher: Well they had pamphlets and handouts of things that had ideas of what makes up a good lesson, and different teaching strategies. We went through a whole brainstorming process of what kind of classroom you'd like to have and what kinds of things you would do there, just to get an idea. I think for them to get an idea and for you yourself to kind of put down on paper what kinds of things you were planning to do and how you would do it.

Within such a context, young teachers are much surer about what is expected of them.

Interviewer: Does it make quite clear what the expectations are or...?

Teacher: I think so yes. For the school yes. It was spelled out in terms of having course outlines prepared and your objectives and details of when things had to be in and...just sort of the general running of the facility so that you could function in it and not be lost.

Interviewer: So what about the process of supervision and evaluation? Did it make it clear what that process would involve?

Teacher: When it came time to get evaluated I was given lots of notice that this was going to happen, that somewhere in this year we would be evaluating you. The first year I was there I got evaluated by one of our assistant principals and he talked to me about it, had me into his office. He had a whole manual with procedure laid out and we went through it. He explained to me what would happen, and what they were looking for. He chose a few evaluation sheets that he could use while he was sitting in the classroom. He could be focussed on a certain area that he really wanted to watch. And he explained to me ahead of time what he was going to be looking for and sort of how he was going to do it.

I had a pre-conference with him where we discussed what he was going to be doing and what he was going to be looking for. We set up the dates of when he would come in, so there were no surprises involved. I knew exactly when he was coming so I could be prepared.

When the central office person felt that he had the time to come in and evaluate me we had a pre-conference where I came and visited with him, in here, in his office. He showed me the forms that he uses and pointed out to me what he would be looking for in the classroom. Basically it was similar to what I'd done before but in much more detail.

The last subtheme that relates to the major theme of a cultural ethos for teacher evaluation is that of Readiness. We mention it specifically because there is little in the transcripts beyond "initial nervousness" and "being apprehensive" that shows a lack of readiness. None of the array of potential worries, concerns, or personal dispositions relative to evaluation that were evident in the Majestic Junior High School interviews was evident—*even with neophyte teachers.* We think this points up the advantage that developing clear policies, based on supportive and collegial principles, that are consistently implemented over a number of years by skilled evaluators gives to teacher evaluation. Majestic Junior High School had just, over the past two years, begun to experiment with these approaches. Their case, however, is nonetheless revealing of the issues inherent in readiness. Another substantive factor that contributes to readiness is the whole experience of the *Collaborative Evaluation Process* that, through Tamarack School District's developmental efforts and training over seven years, we see *magnified* here for new teachers. Most of the blocks to engaging in teacher evaluation as a part of teacher development presented by Majestic Junior High School teachers, due in part to their *past* experiences, were moved aside by the process of evaluation in Tamarack School District. We should note here, however, that this school district's *experienced* teachers demonstrated similar *readiness* problems evident in Majestic School.

The usefulness of Tamarack School District's practices for new teachers was made ever more apparent by those teachers' suggestions for improvement. They included: *let's do it earlier or whenever we are ready; let's have even less routine with it; let's do more visits with peers and observations with evaluators; let's have more input into what we focus on; and let's use videotapes more!*

The Evaluation of Experienced Teachers: Administrators' Perspectives in Tamarack School District

A volunteer group of school administrators was interviewed at regular interviews throughout the year. Depending on their evaluation responsibilities, they provided detailed information on evaluation of experienced teachers.

Evaluation of experienced teachers in Woodlands School Division is almost exclusively the responsibility of school-based administrators. Table 1 shows the extent of that responsibility for each of the administrators in this study.

Table 1
Responsibility for Teacher Evaluation

Position	*# Evaluated in 1991-92 School Year*
Elementary Vice-Principal	4
Elementary Principal #1	4
Elementary Principal #2	5
Elementary Principal #3	4
Secondary Vice-Principal #1	4
Secondary Vice-Principal #2	8
Secondary Vice-Principal #3	5

Typically, administrators base most of their evaluation reports on classroom observations and on conferences with teachers. Administrators report that they engage in both informal and formal conferencing with teachers who are being evaluated. As well, many administrators make both scheduled and unscheduled visits to teachers' classrooms for purposes of gathering information to be included in written reports.

Table 2 shows administrators' reporting of their contact with teachers with whom they are engaged in the evaluation process (1991-1992 school year).

Table 2
Frequency of Administrator-Teacher Conferences and Visits to Teacher's Classrooms as Reported by Administrators

Administrator	*Conferences Average Per Teacher*		*Classroom Visits Average Per Teacher*	
	Informal	*Formal*	*Informal*	*Formal*
Elementary Vice-Principal	10-12	6-10	5+	10-12
Elementary Principal #1	4-5	6-8	3-4	5-8
Elementary Principal #2	4-5	4-5	3-4	0
Elementary Principal #3	2-3	5-6	3-4	2-5
Secondary Vice-Principal #1	8+	6-8	3-4	5-6
Secondary Vice-Principal #2	6-8	4-6	3-4	1-2
Secondary Vice-Principal #3	4-5	8-10	4-6	0

Administrators were often unsure whether a casual conversation with a teacher should be considered an informal conference. We agreed that if the conversation contributed in an important way to the context of the teacher's evaluation report it should be reported in an informal conference. Similarly, in seeking to define an *unscheduled classroom visit* for purposes of this study we decided it should be counted as such if the administrator made the visit primarily to find out more about a teacher's classroom practices.

Administrators clearly spent more time with teachers who participated more fully in the evaluation process than with those who did only what they had to do. Vice-principals spent more time on their evaluations of each teacher than did principals. Elementary principals were in agreement that older, experienced teachers required less of their time to be evaluated fairly than did less experienced teachers. Secondary vice-principals generally gave every teacher the same options for conferences and observations, but they felt that the age and experience of teachers had less to do with how much time administrators devoted to their evaluations. They all agreed that the quality of professional relationship they had with their teachers was the major factor in determining the success of an evaluation for them, and that was not necessarily dependent on the teacher's age and/or experience.

There was a high degree of consistency in elementary administrators' perceptions of teachers' attitudes toward evaluation and their responses to the evaluation practices they experienced through the year. Most administrators agreed that most teachers were "more comfortable" and "less anxious" than ever before and they attributed those feelings to some of all of the following reasons:

1. Teachers know what to expect after nearly seven years of evaluation by school administrators.
2. Teachers are more involved in their evaluations and have greater ownership of the process.
3. Administrators are more confident in their evaluative skills.
4. Evaluation criteria are known to everyone.
5. Administrators are able to practice differentiated evaluation.
6. Teachers trust administrators more.
7. Many teachers have worked closely with administrators on school-based projects.

In contrast to the uniformly positive attitudes of the probationary teachers in Tamarack School District the perceptions, attitudes, and responses of experienced teachers, while mostly positive, were more varied and included various forms of unreadiness to engage in the process. This variety of *readiness* to engage in teacher evaluation, to see it as just a perfunctory check, not to engage actively in linking it to teacher development, is quite similar to the varied readiness of teachers in Majestic Junior High School in Woodlands School Division. One interpretation of this could be that *some* experienced teachers in Tamarack School District, even though many of them had had extensive training, still perhaps reverted to previously socialized attitudes. Another contributing factor might be that the experienced teachers had not had the benefit of the in-depth orientation to policy and practices regarding teacher evaluation that the neophytes had experienced. A third factor might relate to administrator skills for defusing and moving experienced teachers beyond these blocks. It is clear, however, that most of the teachers, probably up to 30, did engage in teacher evaluation in a positive and collaborative way to varying degrees. We try to illustrate how administrators conducted themselves and how teachers positively engaged with them. As well, we include some administrators' frank views of how the process may not be working as well as it could. We also examine a number of cases where evaluation did appear to work well in order to illuminate the full range of concerns that might arise within the evaluation process.

On the Collaborative Nature of Relationship

Several administrators noted that their experiences with evaluation were much richer than could be captured in simple, qualitative ways. Most commonly they spoke of the quality of relationships that developed as they worked more closely with their teaching colleagues and devoted more professional thought and time to achieving a deeper understanding of their teachers' working lives and the impact of their work on the learning of students. Elementary Vice-Principal #1 was probably the most assiduous of all the administrators in this case study in his determination to provide the teachers with whom he worked with every opportunity to participate in as thorough an assessment of their effectiveness as they could realistically accomplish. A brief description of his efforts follows.

Elementary Vice-Principal #1

Late in August the principal, the other vice-principal, and I got together to decide our evaluation responsibilities for the year. I was to work with four teachers, one of whom was in her second year, the other three of whom had five to 12 years of experience. As soon as I could I talked to each of my teachers in turn and asked them to provide me with a short note in which they would outline their key personal goals for the year, what they hoped to get out of the evaluation, something about their career aspirations, and any concerns they had. I responded to each note with a carefully worded note of my own, telling them how I thought I could be useful to them and what I hoped the evaluation process would accomplish for all of us. I then initiated the first formal conference of the evaluation, early in September. I met with each teacher after school for about an hour to negotiate the ways the evaluation would go for the whole year. One thing I really asked for at this time was permission to spend quite a lot of time in the teachers' rooms so that they and their students could get used to my being there. I used to use almost any excuse to visit their classrooms, talk to their kids, find out how they were feeling, and talk about their teaching in very informal ways. I found that these early visits frequently elicited further invitations from teachers, and students in some cases, to come back again to see special lessons or neat activities they were engaged in. Remember, at this point, all I was trying to do was to get the teachers comfortable with my presence and willing to talk as much as they wanted about their teaching. I had not begun to evaluate anything yet.

Early in October I scheduled a large chunk of one school day that I could spend in each teacher's room. I didn't take notes but I encouraged the teachers to involve me as much as they wanted in the activities of the day. Soon after this visit we met again to confirm the goals and purposes of the evaluation; to renegotiate any parts of the process that needed renegotiation; to plan a schedule of more formal classroom observations; and (for me) to make sure that we were working together on this activity, not at cross-purposes. This year I started my classroom observations with all four teachers quite confident that we were engaged in a collaborative venture and that each teacher was a willing, active participant.

Before each classroom observation I held a conference with the teacher being observed. After each observation when the teacher had a chance to read my observations and reflect upon them, we met again to share perceptions and, especially, to talk about teaching. Following each cycle of conference and observation I wrote a one or two page summary of what we had discussed and passed it on to the teacher for review and response. I found this letter really stimulated a lot of additional dialogue and seemed to be a strong element in guiding the evaluator-teacher relationship.

As we got closer to the end of the year I scheduled a conference with each teacher for one afternoon after school, at which time we discussed all those things that were important to the teacher but were not necessarily observable. I learned from my experiences last year that this should be a time for the teacher to talk, not the evaluator. Amazingly, some of these sessions lasted more than two hours and I really did do more listening than talking!

The final part of the formal evaluation process is every bit as important as any other part. I put together a rough draft of the written report according to the categories laid out in our policy. I give a copy to the teacher who is free to suggest additions and deletions, which we discuss as necessary. Then we give a copy of the revised report to the principal who will often add one or two personal comments of affirmation. Finally, the three of us—teacher, principal, and I—sit down and discuss the final report, its highlights, and its directions for future action, sign it, and we're done.

But that isn't the end. Working with teachers in this way I find that we really do come to trust each other. We really engage in more than a superficial conversation about teaching. Teachers really do see clear connections between the evaluation process and their everyday teaching. I am able to document growth and, at the same time, see how their participation in the process motivates teachers to set more purposive goals for the future.

I know the process doesn't end with the signing of the report. Those teachers with whom I have shared this kind of *evaluation experience keep me informed about their teaching and involved in their professional lives from year to year. And they know how much I prefer that kind of relationship with staff. I firmly believe that if we don't enter into our evaluation responsibilities seeking to establish the best possible collegial relationships with our teachers, we may as well accept that it's just a bit of a power game and save our energy for other things. People tell me what I do takes too much time. My response is "Yes, but it works! I can see this process helping teachers now. And I don't think you can say that about traditional evaluation."*

The experiences of Secondary Vice-Principal #3 showed how great the variations in teacher commitment can be and how this can challenge the administrator's expertise, judgment, and authority. He was responsible for the evaluation of five teachers this year. He began in September by meeting with the five teachers to explain what he hoped the evaluations would accomplish. He encouraged the teachers to be as adventurous as they liked in taking charge of their own evaluations. He offered to be as flexible and as available as he could possibly be. At one point he said, "I know a fair bit about teacher evaluation and I'll share everything I can with all of you. Also, I hope to learn a lot more about it as I work with you this year. If you really want to find out about your teaching and the impact it has on student learning, I'll help all I can."

As the year progressed, one teacher took the vice-principal at his word and together they found many "new" ways of looking at and talking about teaching.

Three of the teachers to be evaluated got involved with the process in fairly productive ways but did not show any desire to do more than the policy required. One teacher proved to be almost stereotypically resistant. But we discuss that case later and focus first on an example where he felt a collaborative process was created.

The Risk Taker

Mrs. Johnson has been an English teacher on staff for seven years. In advance of the formal meeting with her evaluator in September, Mrs. Johnson had been to his office and told him of her willingness to get fully involved in the evaluation process. She said she had been thinking about her teaching for quite a while and she hoped this mandatory evaluation could provide the motivation she needed to assess her effectiveness and get started on changes and improvements she wanted to make. The evaluator let her know how pleased he was that she was prepared to work with him in this way and he assured her that he could be very helpful to her.

Her written statement of philosophy and goals, which she shared with her evaluator in early-September, identified two main areas in which she wanted to achieve greater success—students' writing and the use of cooperative learning strategies.

With her evaluator, Mrs. Johnson planned classroom observations that included two other teachers known to be very good in areas where she felt she needed to improve. As well, she arranged to visit those teachers in their classrooms to see first hand how they used various strategies and how they interacted with students. The first formal classroom observation took place in October. The evaluator and a junior high school language arts teacher met with Mrs. Johnson the day before and negotiated what kinds of observations would be made. Following the observation, the three of them got together after school to reflect on the experience. According to the evaluator, the conversation was "terrific." The two teachers were very excited about the teaching that had occurred and the ways in which the students had participated. Moreover, they were delighted that they had been able to learn so much from each other in just one exchange and they were very anxious to repeat the experience.

A second cycle of conference-observation-conference followed shortly afterwards, about two weeks after Mrs. Johnson had returned the visit to the junior high teacher's classroom. The results of the second visit were every bit as exciting as in the first instance and the dialogue between the two teachers left the evaluator feeling exhilarated, albeit somewhat unnecessary to the process.

Mrs. Johnson then engaged in a similar exchange of visits and observations with another teacher from her own staff, and the evaluator, to look more closely at students' writing. Much of the discussion about this aspect of her teaching took place in informal meetings with her evaluator, her own staff colleague, and with other teachers in the district.

Throughout the first semester Mrs. Johnson participated in a series of workshops on cooperative learning that helped her build upon what she had learned in an August workshop dealing with the same subject. When the Professional Development Consortium offered teachers in the district an opportunity to learn more about the new language curriculum, Mrs. Johnson was one of those who got involved in training workshops.

In regular conversations with her evaluator, Mrs. Johnson made frequent reference to how much she was learning about teaching and how pleased she was that she had been able to tie her evaluation and her own professional development together so productively. At the end of the year, the compilation of the final written report that was Mrs. Johnson's four-year, summative evaluation was truly a collaborative effort, just as most of the process had been for the whole year.

From the evaluator's point of view, while Mrs. Johnson made his job very easy in one way, she also presented him with a different kind of problem. As he said, he always wanted to spend more time working with her than he was able to spare and, given the way his administrative responsibilities continued to expand, he probably wouldn't be able to spend very much time with her next year when she was no longer part of his teacher evaluation schedule.

On Noncollaborative Relationships

Elementary administrators felt that perhaps one or two teachers in every school didn't see very much value in teacher evaluation; did not see any strong connections between teacher evaluation and ongoing professional development; resisted any commitment to the process beyond the barest minimum mandated by policy; and could not wait to be left alone again. Conversely, elementary administrators were confident that the great majority of their teachers were active participants in the evaluation process.

Secondary administrators echoed many of the comments of their elementary-level colleagues, but they were more likely to identify and talk about teachers whose commitment to evaluation was at best lukewarm. As well, secondary administrators talked more frequently about time constraints that prevented them from working more closely with their teachers, and about what they saw as weaknesses in the existing evaluation system.

In his final interview a secondary vice-principal spoke at length about what he thought he had accomplished during the year.

Secondary Vice-Principal #2

I haven't done as well as I wanted to with my evaluations. I think it's good that we've come as far as we have in teacher evaluation but there's a lot more we could be doing. Look at all the teachers I worked with this year. They all felt pretty comfortable with me evaluating them. They'll do what's expected of them in the policy. They all get pretty good reports. But a lot of them still want to know if they got an A or a B, and a few of them just want me to get in and get out as fast as I can. As far as the minimum expectations of the policy go, I suppose we're doing fine, but I'm not so sure that would happen if I pushed them, and myself, to go beyond the minimums the way [other administrator] does. That's my frustration. I know I could be a better evaluator. I'm pretty sure I could encourage a lot of my teachers to get much more excited about their teaching, but the message they're giving me is that everything's okay the way it is so why push it? Most of them are happy to treat their evaluations as not very important. They make a lot of staff room jokes about my classroom visits and I think they're trying to tell me not to take it too seriously.

In those cases where administrators felt the evaluation process did not go as well as they would have liked, many were frank in their assessments of their own efforts. The following examples are fairly illustrative of this point.

Elementary Principal #1

I don't react very well when a teacher doesn't participate willingly in her own evaluation. Mrs. H is an old-style teacher who likes to work alone behind a closed door. She doesn't take quickly to change, so she has had a hard time lately with all the changes in the language arts curriculum. If I let her, I'm sure she'd still be using a basal reader, a workbook, and a spelling series in grade 4. So when I'm talking to her about her teaching I always feel as if I have to choose my words carefully because she's just waiting for me to say something that she can interpret as a criticism. In every conference I always end up doing most of the talking and often she ends up crying. I'm not satisfied with the way I handle this challenge and I'm not happy with the kind of final report I've written about her, but we probably won't talk too much about it and we'll go on being uncomfortable with each other.

Elementary Principal #2

I know she's having difficulty in her grade 3 classroom with classroom management and she knows she's having big difficulties with classroom management but I can't get her to do the things I think will make a difference and I don't see her coming up with good ideas of her own. She probably thinks I'm not helping her enough and she's probably right...But how do I write all this stuff up and still provide her with a written evaluation that won't just turn her off.

Secondary Vice-Principal #3 had a positive experience with an English teacher we identified as a risk taker. The evaluations with three other teachers went quite well. In working with his fifth teacher, however, Vice-Principal #3 experienced no end of frustration, as the anecdote of the reluctant participant reveals.

The Reluctant Participant

At the September meeting with his evaluator, Mr. McDonald, a social studies teacher, asked a lot of questions about the process. For example, he wanted to know how much extra time it would take; if the evaluator would be surveying students; how many classroom observations would be made; and why the evaluator wanted each teacher to write out a statement of goals and personal philosophy at the start of the process. The evaluator was mildly irritated by some of the questions, and by the teacher's tone. Some of his responses to the teacher's questions were not fully thought-through and it seemed, right from the start, that the relationship between the two was more adversarial than collegial.

The first scheduled planning conference was postponed at the teacher's request and the first written classroom observations of a social studies class made by the evaluator—more than seven pages of notes—were criticized by the teacher because they did not state what he was doing well and what needed to be improved. In the conference following that observation, the teacher responded to most of the evaluator's questions with apparent indifference. However, when he was specifically asked if he thought lecturing for 62 minutes was, in his opinion, the best way to present information on Nationalism, he replied, "You've seen all my notes. I have a lot of stuff to cover in a limited period of time. For some of this material, lecturing is the only way to go. But I don't only lecture. You've only seen one class."

In subsequent interactions the two appeared to grow further apart. Mr. McDonald hardly spoke during the second formal conference. Instead, he wrote a note to the evaluator after the conference identifying those positive aspects of his own teaching the evaluator had failed to comment upon during the second observation. As well, in the opinion of the evaluator, Mr. McDonald avoided all but mandatory contact with him.

In his written observations of one of Mr. McDonald's classes in early November, the evaluator noted that the activity the teacher had scheduled for 80 minutes took most students from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Also, he reported, many students did not actually work through the graph materials the teacher had distributed. Rather, they copied their answers from other students who finished earlier. While the students were engaged on the worksheet activity, the teacher was marking papers and recording marks. Students who were finished continued to talk in their small groups. Some worked on other assignments. Two girls asked for permission to go to the library. With about 10 minutes to go in the lesson, the teacher called the class to order and marked their answers to the worksheet questions.

As he did on every other occasion, the evaluator left a copy of his observations with the teacher. The next day they met to discuss the observations. The evaluator began by asking Mr. McDonald if he felt the observations were an accurate record of what had happened during the lesson. "Pretty close," was his response. The evaluator then asked, "Did you realize that most of the students were finished very quickly?" and Mr. McDonald replied, "Yes, but I just had to get those report cards done and that seemed like the best time to do it." Next the evaluator said, "It seems like a lot of class time to spend on one little activity" to which Mr. McDonald answered, "Yeah, I suppose so...I took the exercise out of the textbook and the teacher's resource manual. I thought it would take them the whole session to do it."

When the evaluator tried to ask more questions, Mr. McDonald informed him he had only a couple of minutes to spare because he had another appointment. The conference concluded with the evaluator trying to set up another classroom visit and Mr. McDonald suggesting they could get together next week to talk about that.

Three months later, they still had not agreed upon a time or a purpose for that next observation. The evaluator was very angry that he had been both unable and unwilling to get the process moving again. Even more annoying to the evaluator was the fact that Mr. McDonald had stopped talking to him altogether and made a point of ignoring him in the office, hallways, and staff room. The evaluator blamed himself for not using the knowledge and skills he knew he possessed to make this a more productive experience. He blamed himself for letting Mr. McDonald ignore him and, at the same time he talked at length about his own reluctance to bring this matter to a head, and his own avoidance of the unpleasantness he was sure would result if he did not back off.

Meanwhile, word filtered back to the evaluator that Mr. McDonald had been suggesting to some other teachers on staff that the evaluator, a physical education teacher by training, really did not understand how to evaluate a social studies teacher. When he eventually raised this matter with Mr. McDonald the evaluator was told he should write his report and stop playing games. The evaluator informed Mr. McDonald that he was not playing games and he would have to make more classroom observations before he could fairly finish his report.

As of June 2, 1992, the matter was unresolved. A final report had not been written. The evaluator was considering asking the principal or a central office administrator to take over the evaluation of Mr. McDonald, starting afresh next year. Mr. McDonald and the evaluator have had almost nothing to say to each other since their last exchange.

The Evaluation of School Administrators

Although educational leaders in Tamarack School District have expressed considerable satisfaction with the breadth and depth of the district's commitment to teacher evaluation, they have been far less pleased with their policy and practices in the evaluation of school administrators. Since the early 1980s administrator evaluation has been identified as a matter requiring attention and action, but when the district moved so decisively in 1985 to implement a comprehensive model of teacher supervision and evaluation, the evaluation of administrators was relegated to a position of lesser importance in the district's list of priorities. However, in recent years, the subject has been raised again and again at virtually every board-administrators' advance planning session.

In the latter half of the 1990-1991 school year, the administrative council of the district considered a proposal brought forward by five school administrators that evolved out of collaborative action research projects with the authors of this report. In effect the proposal asked that evaluation of school administrators be made a matter of highest priority as soon as possible. In addition, the proposal included some suggestions for action that are truly reflective the district's way of getting things done. One of the recommendations was that a task force be struck to investigate effective administrator evaluation practices by engaging in an actual pilot study in the district.

Accordingly, before the end of the school year the task force was appointed. It included three volunteer principals (one high school, one junior high, one elementary); the three central office administrators with whom each school administrator was matched; one secondary vice-principal; and a classroom teacher. The mandate of the task force was to investigate administrator evaluation using an action research approach, and to prepare a report of their activities during the 1991-1992 school year that would guide the district in formulating the most facilitative administrator evaluation policies, and implementing the most effective administrator evaluation practices as soon as practicable.

One of the central office administrators provided us with his impressions of his involvement in the pilot study.

The Evaluation of Administrators

The evaluation of school administrators has been an issue in our district for several years. In the early 1980s we made our first serious move toward more systematic and less perfunctory practices with the formation of a small committee whose task it was to prepare guidelines for administrator evaluation, but in the two years following the committee's work we continued to talk more and act less than we should have.

Starting in 1985 we made teacher supervision and evaluation our number one priority, and for the next three years we made sure that all administrators were familiar with the policy, the language, various processes, and the expected outcomes of teacher evaluation. We think we can point to some important successes in teacher evaluation, especially as it has influenced and encouraged teacher development in our district, but we have always known we would have to address more squarely the issue of administrator evaluation if we could ever hope to have teachers engage fully in their evaluation process. As if we needed reminding, both teachers and administrators often raised the question, "Who evaluates the evaluators?" when we were engaged in conversations on the subject of evaluation.

In 1990 we met as a central office team to plan ways to introduce administrator evaluation. We started with some basic assumptions. We wanted to take the best of what was happening in teacher evaluation and adapt it to this emerging situation. We knew we would have to have administrator commitment, participation, ownership, and support for every stage of the process from policy development to ongoing review of practices. Especially we knew that whatever we did would have to be seen by teachers to be credible and worthwhile, and we were guided by our own determination that administrator evaluation, in practice, should add value to the work of the district, should be do-able and sustainable over time.

We met several more times during the year to talk about this issue that had quickly become a matter of some urgency. We were very sure about what we wanted to accomplish, but not nearly so certain about the best ways to go about it. Then we got a real break, the kind of thing that seems most likely to happen when members of staff really do believe they have some control over their professional lives. At a regular administrator meeting we received a proposal from five principals indicating their desire to get going on administrator evaluation. They suggested a pilot study approach to the problem, each volunteering to be involved in an evaluation in the 1991-1992 school year.

With the encouragement of all administrators we quickly decided on our strategy for action. We paired three volunteer principals with three central office administrators so that the superintendent would be working directly with an elementary principal; one assistant superintendent would be with a junior high school principal; and the other assistant superintendent would be with a high school principal. In addition, we decided to form ourselves into a task force cum support group with the addition of a high school vice-principal and an elementary teacher, both of whom had a strong background in teacher evaluation.

Our first actual task was to review existing literature and related documentation, and pool our own ideas, to produce some principles for policy and a tentative set of standards to guide our initial explorations. These materials were shared with all other administrators who were given a chance to offer suggestions and propose additions and deletions.

Our next decision proved to be critical. We were adamant that we were going to give this project our best shot. In order to do that we knew we would have to give it high priority, so right from the start we decided our task force would meet every possible Wednesday morning from 7:00-8:30 a.m. Now you must know we're dealing with some pretty committed people here, several of whom saw in this effort "a cause beyond oneself," all of whom have been involved in other district or school initiatives at one time or another. They're busy people, in and out of their schools, but they know from experience that the success of a project is often determined by the willingness of key participants to devote a necessary amount of time to its implementation.

At first I was very unsure about the amount of time the evaluation process and its concomitant action research dimension would take. I talked about it being my highest priority, but it often sounded as if I didn't really believe that, particularly when I saw how much time I was spending on "other highest priorities." I was able to resolve this matter following a conversation with my central office colleagues in which it became clear to me that I could justify spending a lot more time working with the high school principal, getting to know him, his parents, his students, and staff, because his school served more than a quarter of all the students in our district and his teachers made up more than a quarter of all the district's professional staff.

When the principal and I started the actual evaluation process early in the Fall, I felt our first couple of sessions could best be described as informal negotiations. He wanted to be sure I could help him get maximum benefit out of the process. I wanted more than anything else to be useful (and to be seen to be useful) in my evolving role. We both had a genuine need to know that helped us characterize the process as an ongoing investigation with three overarching purposes:

1. *To explore the dimensions of the principal's job.*
2. *To find out as much as we could about how well the principal was doing his job.*
3. *To use that information to help the principal plan goals and identify professional development needs for subsequent years.*

We met at the school at least once every week, and again in our eight-member task force group every Wednesday morning, with a few exceptions. By the middle of October we had decided on many ways I could collect information about the principal's performance. These included interviews with teachers, other staff, students, and parents. At the same time, we were coming to agreement about the kinds of information the principal could contribute to his own evaluation and the different ways that material could be presented. In this regard, the Wednesday task force acted as a professional support group within which we could seek solutions to problems and affirm each other's efforts. Around this time we began referring to our group as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Our determination to make this process work as well as possible was tested early when one or two teachers at the high school expressed concern that we were in violation of the ATA Code of Professional Conduct by attempting to use information they provided to evaluate the principal's performance. We contacted the ATA provincial executive by phone and by letter to get their opinion on what we were doing. Acting on their advice, we talked to the teachers and then wrote a detailed response to their concerns. In the end it helped us a lot because we became so conscious of matters of confidentiality and trust that we clearly went beyond the letter of the Code to a genuine understanding of its spirit as the year went by.

By the middle of May, the principal had provided documentation of every aspect of his daily work that we agreed contributed to a better understanding of the ways he performed his duties. In addition, I had gathered great amounts of information from teachers, students, other staff, parents, and members of the community at large, all of which I had analyzed and organized into a coherent and manageable report. In the last week of May, in accordance with previously agreed upon procedures, I wrote the first draft of an evaluation report, which I then shared with the principal. The report represented my best effort to provide the principal with information that was as accurate as I could get it. It was full and complete, revealing everything I had learned that could be fairly reported. Following subsequent conversations with the principal and with task force members, I shared with the principal the final report. It was long and detailed, and concluded with several very specific, no-nonsense recommendations for growth and change.

What did I learn from this experience? Well, first I learned to make distinctions between what is urgent and what is important in my own job. Because our commitment was real and genuine, being involved in this evaluation process was clearly my number one priority for the year and I organized my time accordingly. I learned a great deal about the principal's work life and the impact of his personal contributions on the work of our school district. I learned how involvement in this process can help restructure roles of central office administrators. In my case, for example, the vehicle of the evaluation process brought me into meaningful and regular contact with my office colleagues, many teachers and students, and especially a group of valued school administrators. It gave me a chance to clarify my own beliefs about what's important in our district, and it gave me a real chance to demonstrate my commitment to that. Moreover, I found that I was highly motivated in other aspects of my work because of the progress I was making in the evaluation process. I could see my knowledge and my skills developing, just as I could see the strengthening of the collaborative relationship that developed, particularly between me and the principal. Through it all I was convinced that what we were doing added value to our work lives. This evaluation process was deeply personal for all participants, and while we had a lot of fun along the way, we were seriously engaged in a process of inquiry that gave real purpose to our daily work. In a very direct way, our actions constituted a statement of our values and the message went out around the district.

I want to add I think the messages got through in both directions. We really listened to what people told us about these principals. We reported our findings to them as openly as we could but, don't forget, they were not defensive at all. They wanted to hear and make sense of both positive and negative feedback. In our pairs, and in our support group, we strove to keep the process as honest as we could make it, and I am sure we were successful.

What about next year? We think we'll try this one more time on a volunteer basis, each of the central office administrators working with one new principal or vice-principal. Also, I will continue to work closely with the principal and staff from the high school and I hope we can engage the high school principal in working with the next principal in some productive ways. Of course, we'll have a task force again next year, with some new faces and a lot of the old ones.

I am really excited about the process and eager to pursue its continuation. Certainly I see it as a way to ensure accountability, but, better than that, enhanced personal and professional relationships have resulted from our efforts so far and there is now a much clearer sense of congruence between our rhetoric and our actions on this issue of administrator evaluation.

The administrative group in Tamarack School District emphasized to us that the efforts of these past several years reflect just the beginning of the process. Typically for this school district they wish to engage in constant reevaluation and improvement of the process until it becomes what they consider to be exemplary. They particularly wish in the future to focus on evaluation of the skills of persons who engage in teacher evaluation.

Reflections on Themes and Patterns Inherent in the Data Related to Administrator Perceptions

In regard to the administrators' perceptions of the evaluation process in Tamarack School District, and indeed the emerging character of administrator evaluations, we feel much of the data can be organized under four themes, of which *Relationship* is primary. The others are *Readiness, Context for Development,* and participants' perceptions of the school or district's *Evaluation Ethos.* We also bring in data from Majestic Junior High School where it supports or contrasts with interpretations expressed here to provide a contrasting and cumulative view.

Relationship

As we have recorded and reviewed participants' contributions we have been impressed by the emphasis both evaluators and teachers place on the quality of relationship that exists between them.

Administrators in Tamarack School District spent a lot of time in conversations with us expressing pleasure at relationships that were obviously dynamic and vital, and dissatisfaction at those relationships that were static, or worse.

One secondary vice-principal discovered dimensions of relationship that would probably have remained below the surface had he not been charged with evaluation responsibilities. As a member of his school staff for 17 years he had developed certain kinds of working relationships with his teaching colleagues. As a vice-principal responsible for teacher evaluation he has found it is difficult to pursue his personal goals in the area of evaluation while still retaining the quality of relationship to which both he and his teachers have become accustomed. He found some of his colleagues tried to make light of the evaluation process, and he often felt pressure not to push too hard. As a result, he was frequently disappointed with the level of teacher commitment to the process, with his own level of commitment, and with the final outcomes of the process.

Elementary principals who did not appear to pay so much attention to the quality of their relationships with teachers as did, say, some vice-principals, were likely to report that they did not spend a lot of time on their evaluations. On the other hand, teachers who claimed to have a good relationship with their evaluator were much more likely to see the benefits of teacher evaluation than those who did not see their relationship with their evaluator as being very good.

Administrators in Tamarack School District who are seen by their teachers to be knowledgeable and skillful in the area of teacher evaluation are much more likely to have better relationships with their teachers. Also, administrators who take risks are seen by their teachers to be more effective evaluators. Teachers who take risks are more likely to be affirmed by their evaluators than those who do not. Generally, administrators whose evaluation style is more collaborative and less formal are seen to be effective in developing relationships, but that is not to say that a laissez-faire attitude or a lack of apparent purpose is affirmed by teachers. Several less experienced teachers expected their evaluators to tell them more about what they were doing well and what they needed to improve. Some administrators reported that they had to be careful with experienced teachers lest they appear to be doing too much telling. Clearly those evaluators who were best able to adjust their style to the teacher's level of concern while remaining true to their own principles and the spirit of the evaluation policy were most likely to experience feelings of success and be seen to be successful by their teachers.

Readiness

Administrators report wide variations in teachers' readiness to participate actively in the evaluation process. In Woodlands School Division, for example, we worked with two teachers who remained quite uncertain about their participation for the whole year and appeared unable to perceive the collaborative tone of the enterprise even when such expectations were clearly communicated and other members of staff were clearly involved in much more complex forms of collaboration with evaluators. Similarly, in Tamarack School District, several teachers were reported to be passive and reluctant in their involvement in the process, while many others, often in the same school, were as committed and as involved as they could be.

But readiness is a factor for the evaluator as well as for the teacher being evaluated. Earlier we noted comparisons between evaluation and teaching, and here again such comparisons ring true. A few administrators, for example, talked often of how much better they could evaluate than they were actually doing, just as many teachers will talk about how much better they can teach than they have regularly demonstrated to date. Some evaluators know the theory of teacher evaluation but are not confident in the application of theory to practice. Some evaluators are skeptical about many potential innovations in teacher evaluations. Some teachers and evaluators are not at all convinced that there could be an adequate return on their investment of extra time and energy in the evaluation process.

As we analyzed those relationships in which progress was made, success was documented, and growth was acknowledged by both partners, we saw that the perceived expertise of the evaluator was of great importance. Also, we noted that those evaluators who were relatively new to an administrative position and who had been appointed at least in part because they possessed expertise in teacher evaluation were more likely to report higher levels of teacher commitment.

Experienced teachers who came to the evaluation process willing to try something different reported overwhelming support for the process and for the effectiveness of their evaluators. Experienced teachers who saw evaluation as something that had to be done ("a necessary evil" was a commonly used term) were generally unwilling to be involved beyond the letter of the district's evaluation policy. Some of these teachers were said by their administrators to be quite discouraging of any extra effort on an administrator's part.

Energetic and enthusiastic evaluators were sometimes seen to contribute greatly to their teachers' readiness to participate in the evaluation process even as it was underway. This was as true in the case of two very experienced teachers learning more about cooperative learning in Woodlands School Division as it was for a whole group of teachers in Tamarack School District who, their evaluator reports, were even more excited about and interested in their teaching in their final evaluation interviews than they were at any other time during the year.

Context for Development

The connections between teacher evaluation and professional development, teacher growth, and staff development were explored in many of the partnerships about which we gathered information. When teachers themselves make the connections and experience little cognitive dissonance in their understanding of the importance and value of such connections, and where at the same time their evaluators share similar understandings, chances are very good for a productive evaluation experience.

School principals reported frequently that it was easier to evaluate a teacher with whom they had already developed a relationship on a previous professional development activity or project than one with whom they had not such formative experiences. Some teachers, notably teachers in both jurisdictions interested in becoming more proficient in the use of cooperative learning strategies, were able to tie their evaluation and their professional development activities together so intricately that in their final interviews and in the opinions of their evaluators the two things were inseparable.

It seems to be harder for the actual evaluation experience to contribute after the fact to teachers' professional development, but it is apparent to us that some evaluations in both jurisdictions have been successful in this way. An elementary vice-principal in Tamarack School District provided abundant evidence that many of the teachers that he first evaluated last year have kept him involved in their ongoing professional development efforts that they indicated evolved out of their evaluation experiences. Moreover, several teachers he worked with this year are developing and pursuing interests that were stimulated by the evaluation process. Similarly, some teachers in Tamarack School District are actively planning a major innovation for grade 7 students and teachers next year, an idea that grew directly out of their evaluations this year.

Most administrators report that teacher involvement in school-based projects constitutes one of the most obvious contributions to more effective evaluations. It is probably fair to assume that teachers who have demonstrated initiative in one dimension of their professional lives will be inclined to do so in other dimensions as well. Also, many school-based projects provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to get to know more about each other in a fairly nonthreatening situation so that if their experiences of each have been positive those feelings will probably be more likely to carry over into the evaluation process.

The Evaluation Ethos

Although both school jurisdictions have clearly defined expectations for teacher evaluation and both are jurisdictions where innovation and risk taking in the evaluation process are strongly encouraged, some apparent differences in history and current practice appear to affect the evaluation process.

In Tamarack School District, all administrators have received extensive training in the theory and practice of teacher supervision and evaluation. In Woodlands School Division, administrators who are knowledgeable and proficient in the area of teacher evaluation have become so on their own initiative. This difference appeared to produce some unexpected outcomes. For example, administrators in Tamarack School District sensed their teachers were inclined to be more critical of them, as they were of themselves, when their evaluation practices did not measure up to the district's level of rhetoric on the subject. Conversely, administrators and teachers in Woodlands School Division experienced times during the year when they asked themselves why they were trying to do so much in teacher evaluation when other colleagues in the same division were not involved in evaluation at anything close to the level of intensity they were trying to maintain in the junior high school. In the former case, teachers and administrators were aware of the district's expectations and how they should be met. In the latter instance, the absence of clearly articulated system expectations and examples contributed to participants' sense of frustration. In both instances, a lack of congruence could be seen to have a deleterious effect on levels of commitment.

In Tamarack School District, for many years it was a source of concern for many teachers and administrators that the energy and effort that was devoted to initiatives in teacher evaluation were not matched at all when it came to evaluation of school administrators. At the start of this year, when the administrators themselves took steps to secure more effective evaluation practices for their group, the district leadership was quick to respond with resources, with a task force, and a pilot study, the parameters of which were very broad. One central office administrator, in reorganizing his priorities for the year to accommodate the new initiative said, "Nearly one quarter of our teachers and one quarter of our students are in the high school. I think I can justify at least one day of every week devoted to the needs of that school."

In Woodlands School Division, the evaluation of school administrators is the responsibility of either the superintendent or the deputy superintendent. There is considerable unevenness in the process and not much certainty on the part of school administrators as to their role and their responsibilities. Perhaps in part because of this, on a few occasions during the year both junior high administrators wondered aloud if anyone really knew or cared what they were doing, and if it was worth it.

It seems obvious that if teachers are made to feel that evaluation practices apply to them but not to anyone else in the system, they may exhibit a lack of enthusiasm for the process. In the same way, administrators who sense that their efforts go unacknowledged, or that administrators who share much less initiative and commitment are affirmed in ways that are not markedly different from those accorded to administrators whose efforts may be exemplary, may lose motivation and enthusiasm.

Conclusion

The Essential Structures and Processes of Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development

These studies, through the use of collaborative action research with teachers and school administrators in one rural junior high school, and probationary teachers and administrators evaluating experienced teachers, and administrators evaluating administrators in an urban school district, have explored potential possibilities for teacher evaluation. Teachers and administrators were invited to show us and tell us how they would best like to see teacher evaluation conducted to be of most use to all participants.

During the 1991-1992 school year together with co-researchers in each site we documented and recorded the experiences of participants and their reflections. We wanted to record what it was like to be evaluated and to evaluate at the outset, during, and at the end of the school year, in the hope that we would be able to describe in detail the sort of evolving processes that evaluators and teachers encountered as they tried to make evaluation work for them. We offer these descriptions in order to provide other school jurisdictions with a sense of what is possible and what might result. We do not expect that all schools will try exactly the same explorations or experience the same outcomes, but we hope the generic themes, categories, and processes exposed here may map the terrain in a somewhat helpful way.

Teacher Evaluation: The Worst Case Scenario

We feel it is important to describe a worst case scenario for teacher evaluation in order to help the reader understand the depth and breadth of dysfunctionality certain attitudes and behaviors can bring to the highly sensitive and personal issue of teacher evaluation. Although *all* of these elements and factors probably seldom pertain in one particular context, we would remind the reader that in our data that examined baseline or "usual" experiences with evaluation, negative experiences outnumbered positive experiences by three to one. As well, *all* of the factors mentioned here occurred in our data. What we might claim, then, is that substantial elements of this scenario do happen in a significant number of contexts and are experienced by most teachers at some time in their careers. *In an educational system that is healthy with respect to teacher evaluation they should rarely occur at all.*

In the worst of all worlds a teacher facing evaluation would be unclear as to when it might occur, what it involves, who conducts the evaluation, what role participants will have in the process, and what the nature of the relationship with the evaluator will be. They will also not be clear as to their personal and professional rights with regard to this process. This state of affairs will occur where a school jurisdiction does not have a clear and fair policy; where a school jurisdiction does have a policy but it is not consistently implemented; and where a school jurisdiction does not have an adequate means of making the intended practices in evaluation known to those who are being evaluated.

Where evaluators do no observing or conduct infrequent, intermittent observations; where observations are impersonal, perfunctory, or of a surprise nature; where the evaluator has not frequented the classroom in an informal or helpful way prior to the evaluation; and where evaluation is only for a report and not part of developmental processes, it is likely that a noncollaborative relationship will develop. This relationship is likely to be, and be perceived to be by the person being evaluated, a hierarchical relationship characterized mostly by issues of power and authoritarianism.

In this context there is little feeling of support and trust, especially with respect to teacher evaluation. It appears as if the evaluator does not want to, cannot, or will not attempt to understand the teacher's working reality and classroom as a knowledge context from which to begin to understand what the teacher is trying to do. The evaluator is then less likely to understand either the teacher's preferred style of planning and teaching, or situation-specific contingencies for a particular class. In such circumstances the evaluator is left with personally implicit or explicit notions of how a teacher should teach and how an evaluator should employ a strategy by which to make observations and judgments. Inevitably, the perfunctory visit involves either a lack of examined and explicit criteria that have not been shared with the teacher or a set of predetermined criteria, in the development of which the teacher was not involved. These criteria may or may not not be congruent with the teacher's philosophy and style, or the particular teaching context.

In many cases like this, therefore, teachers feel helpless. They feel that the process has the potential to be unnecessarily judgmental and prejudicial. Observations made are likely to be compared unfavorably and unfairly to an external set of expectations and criteria the evaluator may choose to use. The tone, therefore, is perceived as negative, critical, and prescriptive. As a result of these conditions, teachers very often experience a range of emotions, depending on personal confidence, from disengagement to debilitating fear, especially if job retention is an issue. Then at times, instead of the evaluation process leading to teacher development, it can lead to a regression of competence, or it might lead to extreme compliance on the part of the teacher to try to produce what the evaluator wants. In such circumstances, it is unlikely that the teacher will take risks and even less likely that the evaluator will see a fair demonstration of a teacher's competence.

In this context teachers do not feel that evaluators value their expertise with respect to the classroom and teaching. As well, evaluation is seen as being separate from context, unable to respond to the whole picture and the whole teacher. Feedback is largely absent; what advice is given is seen as prescriptive, hierarchical, or unhelpful.

The ironic result of most ill-conceived, poorly, and infrequently conducted evaluations is, paradoxically, a relatively positive, if unhelpful, evaluation report. This, if it does not lead to teachers concluding with much cynicism that evaluation is useless, at least convinces them that there is a drastic need for education and training in some evaluation process that provides for fairness and consistency across evaluators, and hope and growth for teachers. What teachers mostly learn from these worst case experiences is that evaluation is not really important. One just performs each infrequent time it rears its ugly head. The challenge is to be compliant and perform according to the evaluator's need to see certain things; not to take charge; not to attempt to engage in a dialogue; not to take risks.

For beginning teachers, the cumulative effect of these sorts of practices reinforces previously negatively socialized attitudes toward authority figures and evaluation. It can make them overly sensitive and unready for genuine attempts to improve teacher evaluation and link it more closely to teacher development. With experienced teachers the effect of this sort of evaluation (bearing in mind it is likely that they have experienced some amount of it already) might be worse, making them even more sensitive, cynical, and resistant to even the more positive of evaluation efforts and other opportunities for change.

The Turning Point: Relationship

In moving from teacher evaluation as a perfunctory and ineffective means of accountability for teaching competence, to effective accountability and, ideally, further to effective accountability as a by-product of teacher development, *the key turning point is a continuing experience of supportive professional relationships, in as many ways as possible.* This process is necessary to set the context in which a collaborative evaluation process can be nurtured and can occur. Both context and process are necessary to overcome administrative and teacher resistance, to enable readiness to occur, and to resocialize teachers and evaluators as to what teacher evaluation can be and how it can become an important element, with other processes, in teacher development.

The experiential structure of education as identified in the literature review is characterized by isolation, privacy, and conservatism. This is contributed to by the physical, spatial, temporal, and professional structure of education, as well as by the safety and security dispositions of educators. These phenomena are further reinforced by noncollaborative evaluation. To move to a set of structures and processes that facilitate a predominant experience of *relationship* requires a cultural change in education. Cyclically, these changes are fueled by continued experiences with collaborative relationships, both inside and outside the process of evaluation.

Resistance and Readiness

In moving from dysfunctional cycles of nonrelationship and teacher stagnancy to multiple cycles of relationship and collaborative evaluation processes, educators are likely to encounter various form of resistance and levels of readiness. These phenomena are *understandable* in several senses of the word. First, we can understand and empathize with the teachers who do not want to subject themselves to what they have experienced previously. We can also understand and empathize with the untrained administrator, rushed for time, who does not want to repeat those dysfunctional experiences. Second, we have enough data to understand how things came to be this way. It is of vital importance, then, that we see the solving of the problem and make sense of the various blocks and the states of unreadiness in a nonjudgmental way. Part of the solution can be found in gradual developmental processes practiced over time. It probably will take much experience of positive relationships to move educators to healthy organizational relations and evaluation processes. Some will take longer than others. The first key, however, and the common element in this transfunctional process is that all participants in all roles be involved as partners in a continuing effort to become co-designers of the whole process. Ideally, in the end all would be equally exposed to evaluation by all.

It is possible that understandably cynical experienced teachers will not *hear* talk of collaboration, but they may *feel* it if they are involved as part of the evaluation process with their peers in pursuing their own professional development agendas. Teachers' previously socialized fear of authority figures, whether authoritarian or not, do not disappear quickly even when teachers have more experience of horizontal collegial relations, not only with peers but with evaluators. As several examples in these case studies have shown, previous mistrust can be overcome when an evaluator and teacher together tackle a difficult class, or an unfamiliar subject, or a new curriculum, to help solve a mutual problem. When teachers who are used to blocking out the evaluator can be made partners in these ventures they are encouraged to unblock and engage in dialogue. If the first question teachers and evaluators ask each other is what do *we* want to find out, what risks to *we* want to take for our mutual professional benefit, *however modest the first efforts*, then the purposes of teacher evaluation are clearly focused on development in a collegial relationship between co-learners.

The Possible in Educator Evaluation

In this section we would like to take the essential structures and processes evident in our data from the collaborative action research projects and stretch them just a little further, not to the *ideal*, but to what we see as possible. Most of what we suggest has already been demonstrated in the case studies. We elaborate and extrapolate a little as we practice the art of the *possible* for healthy educator evaluation. What we recommend we feel applies equally to administrator evaluation as to teacher evaluation, or to the evaluation of any other group of educators or professionals.

Developing an Organizational Culture and Ethos for Teacher and School Development that Subsumes the Evaluation of Educators in all Roles

Policy

In order to move to the really functional level of useful teacher/educator evaluation that contributes to continued teacher and school development, as illustrated by our case study data, it is imperative that school boards move beyond having fair but isolated policies for teacher evaluation to having collegial and collaborative policies for teacher development that *subsume and integrate in a contributing way* policies of teacher/educator evaluation. Although these policies would be district-wide, they would focus on the functional groups, that is, school or curriculum-based group of educators who would work collaboratively on their own individual and collective needs for development. The following elements of policy would be mandated, facilitated through the actions of leaders, and provided with the necessary human, material, and physical resources.

One core element of the policy for teacher development would relate to the continued facilitation of multiple forms of collegial relationships among peers and across role and stakeholder groups. Efforts would be made to provide time, space, and other forms of resources to encourage collaboration.

The policy on collaborative teacher and school development would include explicit policy on teacher and administrator evaluation, linked to and integrated with educator and school development. It would deal with continued collaborative evaluation of all educators, not just teachers, and would take account of the possibility of mutual evaluation whereby, for example, peers could evaluate each other and teachers could evaluate their administrative colleagues' skills in evaluation as those people in turn evaluate teachers.

Policies would clearly acknowledge the difficult working realities of teachers and administrators and particular impediments to the realization of collaborative teacher/administrator/school development. Policies should recognize that this type of transitional change takes time (perhaps five to seven years) to deliberately and consciously develop. Potential impediments to development could be identified *in a nonjudgmental way* and suggestions made as to how they can be overcome. The roles of existing teachers in the school jurisdiction in helping with the transformation from the more hierarchical and isolated forms of organization to a more collegial and relational culture should be spelled out as far as possible.

Action

Programs of orientation for teacher/administrator/school development and collaborative evaluation should be planned and continuously implemented,

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aided by the provision of facilitating structures and resources for various groups to work together toward mutually determined goals. These actions are needed not just for transformation and for the induction of neophytes, but for the continuing development of *all* individuals and groups.

Training

It is clear from research that constant and continuous training in skills of collaborative development and evaluation are needed by *all* educators—teachers and administrators. Specific skills are needed in evaluation. Furthermore, specific skills are needed in the understanding and implementation of new teaching techniques and curriculum changes. In keeping with findings of our case studies, we would say it is imperative that these new skills should be learned by cadres of teachers and others, learned through peer teaching and practice across school jurisdictions and in functional groups. In this way the school jurisdiction, then, can begin the process of becoming its own resource for teacher development needs.

Establishing a Context for Teacher Development Through Relationship

School systems should provide incentives and resources to encourage schools in the invention of creative ways of organizing time and energy for collaborative projects of all sorts, whether related to school policy, decision making, curriculum innovation and implementation, instructional development, classroom management, school climate, school philosophy, school goals, or a school's vision for the future.

The key ingredient here is that the school staff be challenged to decide for itself, within school jurisdiction and governmental guidelines, where it is going, what it will do, and how it will accomplish its tasks. With regard to teacher and administrator development and school improvement, it must be the responsibility of the school staff to set its course as opposed to the school being directed from outside or drifting with no direction. Moreover, it must be the responsibility of the school staff to set its own collaborative course in conjunction with local stakeholders.

Developing the skills of collaboration whereby all participants have equal opportunity to contribute and negotiate mutual agendas is not easy. It will take time for staffs to develop the skills of taking responsibility, while administrators need time and guidance as they gradually become more knowledgeable of forms of collegiality necessary to provide the context and support for teacher development. In terms of a metaphor, the transformation perhaps might be characterized by moving from "Army" to "Team." A simple, symbolic transformation in school structure and use of time might involve something as basic as changing a proportion of staff meeting time from large-group formal communication to small-group dialogue related to issues, agenda setting, and problem solving, the results of which could then be reported back to the large group, discussed, and acted on democratically.

Regardless of any of the above, however, we would argue that little will change with respect to the development of teaching skills generally unless more teachers risk themselves to try out, invent, practice, and refine new skills in their own classrooms. To do this, most teachers need the interpersonal support of trusted colleagues; a sense of purpose that goes beyond the mundane; access to new knowledge and skills; dedicated time for purposive action and reflection; and a climate of encouragement. Although teachers initially are resistant, school-based projects featuring interclassroom visitation, peer coaching, and focused on the teaching and learning that is occurring on a continuing basis are the sorts of activities that make it more likely that teachers will try new ideas and practice them effectively to make them part of their work lives and teaching styles. When teachers are able to make the teaching and learning that happens in their classrooms the focus of ongoing inquiry, they are able to live the part of the lifelong learner.

Collaborative Evaluation Processes

From our findings we have gathered clusters of ideas into two tentative principles and a set of suggested processes.

Principle 1

The practice of evaluation should be collaborative, involving all participants in relationships that have personal and professional value for each of them.

Principle 2

The primary goal of evaluation should be, and should be seen to be, the professional development of all participants.

These principles apply as well to other evaluation processes of other educators. Our case studies have shown us that the practice of these two principles is a quick way of implementing a fair, respectful, and useful collaborative and collegial process of evaluation.

Suggested Processes

1. Both evaluators and teachers should be knowledgeable of what research shows is good teaching.
2. Both evaluators and teachers should have an understanding of current literature dealing with effective evaluation skills and practices and be trained in such skills.

3. Expectations and overall processes regarding evaluation (of teachers and administrators) should be clarified *each time* educators come together for evaluation purposes.
4. More formal aspects of evaluation should evolve out of ongoing collaborative development efforts and informal visitations.
5. The overall focus of evaluation efforts should be mutually negotiated and should take into account teacher specified development needs and goals, research, administrator expectations, and system needs.
6. There should be frequent, linked clusters of observations, interviews, and conferences, each having clearly defined purposes and each producing clearly documented outcomes. Genuine dialogue among participants is the overarching goal of such activity.
7. The minimum number of formal observations per year for a neophyte, probationary, or experienced teacher who is being evaluated *should be much greater* than typically occurs. Observers could include peers, in-school, and central office administrators. More purposive observations by skilled and trusted evaluators contribute to much higher levels of understanding about teaching practices and learning outcomes and an enhanced willingness to change.
8. The relationship of evaluator to evaluatee should be characterized by informality, a personal approach, mutual negotiation and respect, interpersonal support, an absence of negativity and gratituitous judgment, rapid positive affirmation of strong points, encouragement, and challenges for growth.
9. The observations and conferencing should be characterized by the skills of affirmative interpersonal communication. In fact, a goal of the whole process should be the affirmation of all participants.
10. At a certain stage the use of videotapes of teaching episodes for providing concrete and graphic feedback should be encouraged. At other stages both evaluators and evaluatees should encourage each other to take risks in solving problems and exploring new ideas.
11. There is value in having a variety of persons provide feedback to the individual being evaluated. In the case of teachers, the process could start with peers, move to in-school administrators, then to others to provide for a gradual move to external evaluators.
12. All the above suggestions with regard to teachers might be applied to the evaluation of the skills of the evaluator and to the evaluation of other persons in other roles in education.

The above framework could be organized into a base for first-year teachers and probationers, as well as the whole range of experienced teachers. However, the process should be graduated and adaptable with respect to the levels of participation and the degree of self initiation expected of teachers at various stages in their careers.

Making it Happen: Transforming Leadership

A great deal has been written recently about the kind of educational leadership that contributes to the empowerment of staff and the restructuring of schools. The term transformational leadership has been used to describe the style of those educators who exercise the kinds of influence that encourages initiative, risk, and extra effort in fellow educators. Unfortunately, most of what has been written on the subject of transformational leadership has been theoretical in character. As with much that is current in educational literature, a broad body of evidence based on in-depth investigations of the successes and problematics of these "new" ideas in practice is not readily available. Our case studies have provided ample reminders of the messiness of educational leadership in practice, the difficulty of finding practices that give evidence of hoped-for changes, and the dangers inherent in the bureaucratic prescription and false standardization that can quickly become attached to evolving practices that show signs of being effective. The evidence we have gathered through a collaborative action research approach to understanding the impact of teacher evaluation policies on school system practices encourages us toward cautious optimism, but we see the need for major, broad-based research and development initiatives if many of the hopeful things we have described are to spread more generally into the public education system.

Through our involvement in these case studies we have been fortunate to work with a great number of committed educators who are thoughtful and forthright about their work and its impact on students, teachers, administrators, and the various communities their schools and systems serve. In particular, we have been able to work closely with many people whom we would describe as leaders, and in our own reflections on what we have seen of their work and its effect we have used the phrase *transforming leadership*, with its implication of both the description of an evolving process and of the ways in which educational leaders are changing and being changed by the quality of their involvements with other educators, to describe some of what we observed.

Transforming leadership describes the work of the vice-principal whose efforts in evaluation have encouraged many of his staff to *live* the links between teacher evaluation and teacher development. As well, it is exemplified by the willingness of a principal to engage in team teaching with all his teachers, not just once but two and three times in a year in order to make the evaluation process more rewarding and more real.

Transforming leadership is a particularly apt way of characterizing the collaboration between a high school principal and an assistant superintendent who involved themselves thoroughly in an investigation into the most productive ways of engaging in the evaluation of school administrators. The leadership shown by the principal in initiating the process, and in being so open all the way through, offers a fine example of a different way for school administrators to take greater ownership of the evaluation process. Similarly, the assistant superintendent's realization that he *could* give a larger share of his time to this activity, because by so doing he could have regular contact with more than a quarter of the system's staff and students, led to several conscious changes in the way he saw his role and the way he did his job. Administrator evaluation was no longer an add-on to his already busy schedule. Instead, it became the medium through which he was able to make much greater sense of his work. His purposeful involvement in the evaluation process brought a clearer sense of mission and a heightened sense of usefulness to all his other work as well.

Our case studies show that the evaluation process has the potential to transform professional and personal relationships between those who are administratively responsible for evaluations and those who are being evaluated. At its best, the evaluation process inspires teachers to genuine appraisals of their effectiveness and sincere commitment to ongoing professional growth. At its best, involvement in the evaluation process helps administrators make sense of the difficult ethical issues of administrative position, status, power, and authority. Ideally, a commitment to the tenets of effective evaluation matched with all the appropriate actions our case studies have identified can result in participants having a view of each other's role as one primarily of service in a truly vocational sense.

Educators are collectively curious about their work and its effects. The great majority of them are particularly concerned with doing their work well, with being useful, and with being valued. Typically, traditional forms of evaluation have not taken account of these concerns, and as a result evaluation has not generally been regarded as having high value by and for those being evaluated. Our case study findings support these conclusions while offering many potential directions for action that should help frame the challenges that must be accepted if public education is to be served by those evaluation practices that contribute most to the health of the system. Evaluation, essentially practiced as the authentic affirmation of educators' work, can lead to individual, staff, school, and system transformation.

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Chapter 13

A Case Study of Meadowlands School District

> The evaluation is almost more for their [the administrators'] benefit than for ours.
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> My reaction to the purpose of the district office to evaluation is simply to grind through the people; it has to be done ... it's required; let's get it done. Whether it's of value or use, it doesn't matter.
>
> I've always had positive evaluations.... But as far as me growing, I've grown more from attending inservices, talking to other teachers who are teaching the same thing, finding out what do you do for science, how do you teach this?... I've learned more from teachers I've worked with, more than I ever did from any evaluation.

In our conversations with teachers, we wanted to make a space for them to give voice to their experiences of evaluation. The above quotations give something of the sense of what we heard as we worked with teachers to hear their accounts of the impact of the teacher evaluation policy on their practices.

The Study

Meadowlands School District, a mid-sized school district was approached to participate in the study. Initial contact was made with the senior administration of the district who after learning about the nature and purposes of the study agreed to discuss the possibility of participating with school administrators.

The Case Study Schools

The project was outlined to all the school principals at a breakfast meeting, and they were asked to discuss possible participation in the project with their staffs. Four schools volunteered, and the names of the schools and the principals were forwarded to the research team. Two schools were selected from the four volunteer schools by the research team. One school was a kindergarten to grade 6 school and the second a kindergarten to grade 9 school. The first school (Prairie West elementary school) was chosen because of prior work undertaken by teachers in the school to develop their own evaluation process within the district policy. The school administrators and the team of teachers who had undertaken this task were keenly interested in evaluation. The second school (Roselawn elementary-junior high school) was chosen because of the range of grade levels covered by its teaching staff. The administrative team in that school was relatively new but expressed an interest in evaluation.

The research team met first with the school administrators, then with interested teachers in each school to discuss the purpose of the case study, how it fitted into the larger study, and what their participation would entail. After a period of deliberation, 18 teachers plus the administrators in the two schools volunteered to participate in the study.

The Teacher Participants

Fifteen teacher participants were female and three were male. The educational background and teaching experience of the teacher participants were richly diverse.

All the participants possessed a Bachelor of Education degree, and several had completed various aspects of graduate study. Length of teaching experience ranged from four years to 22 years. Some participants had taken time off to raise a family.

Many of the teachers had taught in several locations, urban, suburban, and rural, throughout the province. They brought with them an understanding of teacher evaluation from their personal experiences gained in provinces and territories throughout Canada. Their reflections are based on their experiences with evaluation from across their career spans. Not all of the experiences to which they refer are from their experiences in this school district.

At the time of the study, 14 were teachers employed in elementary school settings. Their teaching assignments covered a broad spectrum from regular and special education classes to counselling and music. One was a teacher/administrator. The remaining three were junior high school teachers. Taking into account both current and previous teaching experiences, the participants had taught all levels of schooling from kindergarten to undergraduate university. Although voices heard in this study belong to 18 eloquent teacher participants who varied in teaching experience and professional background, they reflect the general characteristics of the teaching population within the district.

The views of the district level administrators and the two school's principals are woven together with the themes derived from the teacher participants.

The Research Process

Two members of the teacher evaluation policy implementation research team, met the administrators in each school both to acquaint them with the research project and to learn more about the teacher evaluation process in the school. After meeting with each school's administration, meetings were held with interested teachers in order to determine if they were interested in participating in the study. All members of the research team attended these meetings.

As well, the research team met separately to share their understandings of the overall research project, discuss their own views of evaluation, and set the parameters for the case study. These initial meetings also served as a time for them to come together as a group and to learn to work collaboratively. Collaboration among the research team has been a key feature of this process. It was during these research team meetings that the initial research interview questions were developed.

The initial research questions and statements for the interviews were as follows:

1. *"Tell me something about yourself."* This statement allowed the interview to focus initially on the participant's educational background and teaching experience.
2. *"Share a personal story of evaluation."* This statement was left open-ended so as to allow the participant to include any experience of evaluation that he or she wished to share. As the interviews progressed, many experiences of evaluation were worthy of note and often the participants set them up as a comparison.
3. Within the context of these specific experiences, the participant was asked, *"Explain the impact of these evaluations on your teaching."*
4. *"What has had the greatest impact on your teaching?"* This question was included at the suggestion of a district administrator. The question was stated in general terms so that teachers could include a wide range of experiences, including or excluding teacher evaluation.

During the same time period, two team members met with the district administrators to learn more of the district level policy and the district's perceptions of the teacher evaluation policy and its impact.

Not all the teachers who eventually volunteered to participate attended these first meetings. Teachers not present at those meetings received their explanation of the project from one of the team members who conducted the interviews. Prairie West elementary school had 12 teacher participants, with three team members conducting the interviews. Of those 12 teachers, six had been on the school committee that developed a new teacher evaluation document. Roselawn elementary-junior high school had six teacher participants, and two team members conducted the interviews.

The transcripts of the initial interviews were returned to the teachers, and a second interview was conducted with each teacher to verify, change, and elaborate points arising from the transcripts. After these interviews, the research team began a process of identifying common threads in the conversations with the teacher participants. Each research team member read the transcripts and identified themes from each teacher participant's transcripts. Each team member then identified themes that seemed to capture the experience of all of the teachers in each school.

The research team then came together and examined all the themes that had been picked out by each team member. Nine themes were identified from these initial interviews:

Purpose of Evaluation—accountability, growth
The Evaluator—subject background, grade level, relationship with evaluatee
Structure of Evaluation—documents, visits
Time—length, frequency
Impact of Evaluation—on classroom practice
Emotional Impact—negative and/or positive
Sources of Professional Growth and Development
Teacher Involvement in Evaluation—teacher participation
Hopes and Dreams—Evaluation should ...

Representative quotes relating to each theme were selected from all the transcripts, and permission to use the quotes was received from each teacher. The research team then made a summary document of the themes plus illustrative quotes. At this point each teacher received a copy of the document, which became the basis of further whole-group discussions that took place at a dinner meeting at each school. At Prairie West nine of the 12 teacher participants attended this meeting. At Roselawn school five of the six teachers attended the meeting. All members of the research team were present at both meetings. Teachers were given an opportunity to discuss whether the themes resonated with their own understandings of teacher evaluation.

Research team members made field notes of the two sessions, which were also audiotaped so that if clarification of issues was needed, the researchers could check the audiorecording. After each research team member summarized the most salient features of the sessions, the research team met to discuss their interpretations of these conversations. From these discussions an interpretive summary of each of the meetings was written up under the following headings:

Validation of themes
New and/or expanded ideas
Contradictions and tensions
Future action

Each of the teacher participants was given a copy of the interpretive summary for his or her school. No further meetings were scheduled to discuss these summaries but an invitation was extended to each teacher to contact any member of the research team if he or she wished to discuss any of the ideas raised in the interpretive summary.

Two team members met with two district level administrators to find out their perceptions of the impact of the teacher evaluation policy. At this time, there was also a further discussion of their insights into teacher evaluation. They met with the principal of Prairie West elementary school to review the nine themes and to share the written account that had previously been shared with the participating teachers in that school.

A draft report was prepared for the teachers and was shared with them in August 1992. Underlining all aspects of this task was a concerted effort to remain authentic to the voices of the teacher participants.

Describing the Policy: Setting the Context for the Themes

The district administrators described the policy as one developed very quickly in response to a requirement by Alberta Education. It was intended to establish both a way of making teachers accountable and a process of summative evaluation. The policy requires that school administrators complete evaluations of teachers every three years, although there are different requirements for teachers who transfer into the district, teachers who transfer within the district, and beginning teachers.

The process of evaluation established within the policy was based largely on an instrument taken from a United States setting and revised in the district. The evaluation procedure involves a series of classroom observations by the administrator in which particular competencies are observed. There is a process of pre- and postconferences, written reports and summaries. The sequence to be followed and the forms to be completed are sent out from the district office. A summative evaluative form is to be filed in the district office.

Prairie West staff have modified their school's process somewhat as a result of an in-school evaluation committee. Its main features are described later.

Re-presentation of the Themes Connecting Teachers' Experiences of Evaluation

The analysis of the first set of interviews involved the research team in trying to construct themes from the data. Patterns and recurring thoughts and ideas were noted and discussed. What emerged were nine influential themes related to the concept of teacher evaluation. Although there exists strong interconnectedness between the themes, each is discussed separately. The description of themes and the use of direct quotations from the teacher transcripts is intended to permit reader entry into the situation. What follows, then, is a re-presentation of the ideas that have been expressed by the teacher-participants in the study. In each case, we have also included relevant information from school principals and district level administrators.

Purpose of Evaluation

Of greatest concern to the teacher-participants was the dilemma surrounding the purpose of evaluation. A shared perception was that the current evaluation process served only to provide the school district and, through them, the public with a form of accountability for teachers.

> I think we have to be accountable, you know, to parents, to the community ... that you do meet certain standards; basically that you are providing for the child's learning.... You're not doing anything too confrontational.

As the current evaluation processes are set up, there is a sense that only administrators can make the teachers accountable. This creates a stressful situation because the teachers are primarily concerned with growth, not accountability. Principals know the "weak links" (ineffective teachers) in their schools prior to evaluation. The teacher participants questioned why so much energy was spent through the evaluation process to determine "what was already known." The evaluation process has a negative feel, because the current evaluation process is geared toward checking up on people rather than promoting development. There was dissatisfaction with an evaluation system that was seen as a deficit model.

An equally widespread perception among the teachers was that the teacher evaluation process had little personal value, but served only to fulfill the mandate of the current administration. Who is evaluation for when you say, upon completion of evaluation, "send it in"? The evaluation process was believed to be, for the most part, a top-down model that did not facilitate growth. The process did not let evaluators get to know the "whole" teacher. A bottom-up model, they felt, would lead to self-evaluation and reflection.

> The evaluation is almost more for their [the administrators'] benefit, than for ours.

> My reaction to the purpose of the district office to evaluation is simply to grind through the people; it has to be done.... It's required; let's get it done. Whether it's of value or use, it doesn't matter.

Some of the teachers' comments centered on a need for recognition of teachers' practices. They felt this need was served through the evaluation process. They thought growth could be seen as things to correct but it could also be considered as a pat on the back for "good" things that teachers did routinely and took for granted. The teachers looked for the good they could take from evaluation; they tried to see it as an affirmation of their work.

> I think what it is, is sort of a confirmation of the fact that what you're doing every day is important.

> I feel very confident in the teaching skills and strategies that I have developed. I feel it is important for my admin-

> istration to visit my program in order for them to develop an understanding of my philosophy and how it is implemented within my room. Their understanding of my teaching methods validates and supports me.

> Evaluation ... is being done because it's a bureaucratic way of keeping track. It can serve to protect me as a teacher, in terms of people questioning what I am doing. Hopefully there are no other hidden agendas.

There was a strong sense that the purpose of evaluation remained the same for all teachers, regardless of experience. The purpose did not change as the teacher developed. Teachers felt that, in this context, evaluation was a waste of human resources, as principals were required to fill out long, tedious forms for veteran teachers that only dealt with basic teaching skills. Evaluation, as one teacher participant commented, reduced everyone to the lowest common denominator. Moreover, the participants believed that the policy was failing not only successful, experienced teachers by not encouraging their continuing development, but also struggling teachers by diverting resources that could have been used to help them.

> It's just a repetition of all the things that have been cited before.

> I think that a lot of teachers who could use a lot of help are struggling out there. They're under a lot of pressure and they're really floundering and they need help. Maybe they've been uncovered but they're still out there floundering. So I don't see how the evaluation is really working. It puts everybody through the exact same process.

Regardless of statements to the contrary, there was a belief that a lack of trust is at the heart of current evaluation practices. Teacher participants felt that one of the real purposes of teacher evaluation was to control and silence teachers and that this needed to change.

> I think we certainly have felt in our system that we're all paying a little bit of a price for Jim Keegstra.

There was a sense among the teacher participants of *missed opportunity* when they discussed the possibilities of evaluation as a vehicle for personal, professional, or institutional development. Teacher participants felt that generally teachers were doing a good job and the way to facilitate improvement in education was to encourage teachers to be dynamic and grow.

> My experience when I was being evaluated did very little for me professionally ... I didn't learn anything about what I had done in the classroom or about myself. I didn't learn anywhere where I could grow.

The teachers' view of evaluation is that while much of the rhetoric of teacher evaluation suggests that accountability and growth go together, the process appears to separate them. If accountability could be viewed as *rendering an account of*, then it would be brought closer to the concept of professional growth. If all teachers were asked to render an account of their own growth and development, it would serve to encourage good teaching from a positive perspective rather than a negative one.

District administrators also shared the view that there was a tension in purpose between professional growth and accountability. There was a belief that both purposes should be served, but this belief was tempered in practice by a sense that Alberta Education put pressure on jurisdictions to ensure accountability. The district administrators felt a sense of responsibility to be aware of and accountable to the needs of parents and trustees. They hoped that the policy and associated evaluation process and instrument allowed teachers to examine and to improve their practices. However, a concern was expressed that the instrument did not always foster that kind of professional growth.

The school administrators also acknowledged a similar tension between the purposes. Because Prairie West had found the district's instrument "too restrictive," permission was granted by the district to develop another instrument. The new instrument was developed through a "collaborative approach" and was intended to provide an opportunity for both the administrator-evaluator and the teacher "to learn more to meet the needs of the children." There was now a belief that with the new process, evaluation and professional development were more connected, particularly in the pre- and postconferences. Roselawn administrators saw the board policy and instrument as meeting accountability requirements, although they tried to use the evaluation process as an opportunity to help teachers develop professionally. Teacher growth, however, was encouraged primarily through other programs.

The Evaluator

Teachers understand evaluation in terms of the personality of the evaluator. It is to the evaluator's distinct personality that teachers look to find the purpose of evaluation.

> I've had eight different administrators and they're all different and they all evaluate differently. And they all have their little pet things that they like. Some are easygoing and some aren't. Some are really picky. What I'm saying is that this whole evaluation thing, it doesn't matter what instrument you've got, it's always subjective. It always comes down to personalities almost.

> I had the principal and the vice-principal evaluate me and I really like that ... because I think you get two different personalities and get their perspectives and I think that really helps because one person might see something and another person might see something else.

Personality is an all-encompassing way of assessing the role of the evaluator in the evaluation process. In a more specific context, teachers identified the importance of the evaluator's curricular knowledge, and, related to that, the evaluator's knowledge and/or experience with particular grade levels. Within this context teachers identified the role conflict between the principal as educational leader and the principal as evaluator. One view of this dilemma is that the evaluator should be viewed as an peer of the teacher who is being evaluated with respect to subject area and grade level, that there needed to be a common or level meeting ground. Another view was that the principal would better serve the teachers in the role of educational leader where he or she could encourage growth, change, and risk-taking.

> The professional development that goes on...in my field...is where I have to be in order to improve me. A principal walking in isn't going to change me and make me a better person and try to improve my teaching because they don't even know about my subject, they really don't.

> It's that hierarchical thing that we do to each other and of course I have a lot of difficulty seeing hierarchy in a school even between administrators and teachers...in the teaching area I find it difficult that there's anybody who knows more than anybody else in the sense that they would be experts. Because I think that throws people off.

> I'm sure that there are some areas in there that could spend some reflection on my part; it would be nice to get someone in there who was really, really primary-oriented and looked around and said, that was good, but you know, have you ever thought of trying this?

The relational aspect of evaluation was important to the teachers. The work of teachers is grounded in relationships and this was expressed as a factor in evaluation. A concern was expressed about people from outside the school dropping in to evaluate. They had no understanding of the classroom context. They were unaware of what had gone before and what would come after.

> I work daily with the vice-principal, and we are teaching partners, you know, I can see that situation, if he were to evaluate me, I would probably do a very good job, as best I could. But I think that if you have an administrator who is more distant to you, it becomes more difficult when the evaluation occurs.

> When time for the formal evaluation came, she had given me enough time and enough help to get into, to feel comfortable with her in my classroom, and to feel comfortable with whatever I was teaching when she was there.

> If there is a case where it is a person where I don't particularly respect them, then what they say is not very important to me.

For teachers, the evaluator embodies the purpose of evaluation and at the same time, through the structure of evaluation, acts on that embodied knowing. This led some teachers to reflect that perhaps it was the administrators who experienced the most growth from the evaluative process.

The district administrators acknowledged that much depended on the relationship between administrator/evaluator and the teachers. They too saw that a great deal depended on the person who was doing the evaluation. The person and the way he or she used the form was more important than the nature of the instrument that was used.

Although the school administrators did not deal directly with the role of the evaluator, they also indicated that much depended on the relationship. They tried to establish positive relationships with teachers as they worked through the evaluations, engaging teachers in discussions of personal goals, showing respect by letting teachers know when they were coming, and providing opportunities for talk and for getting to know each other.

Structure of Evaluation

Teachers were dissatisfied with the evaluation process. It must be emphasized that the teachers did not object to evaluation per se; it was with the current process that they found fault. Teachers felt that the evaluation process did not facilitate either accountability or growth. In the area of accountability, it was generally felt that teacher incompetence was brought to the attention of administrators by a variety of indicators, from parent and student complaints, to discipline problems in the classroom, but not from evaluation.

The evaluative structure was perceived as treating everyone the same way. This led to teacher frustration.

> I don't think one type of evaluation fits everybody. How can you be using the same instrument for a first year teacher as you use for a teacher who has been teaching for 25 years? It's just ridiculous.

> Measures, standards—whose are they?

Another concern was that the same process and the same evaluation form were used to evaluate vastly different teaching jobs:

> I didn't feel there was the flexibility or true understanding of what child development is all about...in terms of development of young children you can't write...children should be able to count from 1 to 10 or be able to recognize all the letters of the alphabet, which is a measurable objective by the end of the term—some children who are developmentally ready will have those skills and other children won't—so I had a difficult time with that.

> I was a resource teacher at the time and well trained to do that, but there was no place on the form to evaluate my resource teaching. I could only be evaluated in a classroom setting. So whatever was on the form that didn't apply to my resource teaching he said I didn't do adequately.

> When you're evaluating a special ed. teacher's performance, their quality of IEP and their effectiveness of IEP should probably be included in the evaluation at some point. And it's hard in a generic form to do that unless you added something onto this form to indicate that.... And within a music classroom, I think that a music teacher would find this form very hard to conform to or fit into.

When some of the teacher participants participated in a review of teacher evaluation in their school, they expressed this dilemma in more general terms.

> We were concerned that we were teaching in one way and being evaluated in a different way.
>
> So what we tried to do is come up with a process that would mirror more one's own evaluative techniques with our students and would reflect better our own teaching styles, and we also felt we are a product of more than just what happens in the classrooms.

It was suggested by several teachers that the evaluation process had a negative *feel* to it, despite the fact that the participants generally received positive comments on their final report. The negative feel of evaluation was symbolized most noticeably by the prescription of a *target area*. There was a strong perception that the district office had mandated that an area of weakness be identified for each and every teacher who was evaluated.

> If you don't shape up there is this target sheet as the back and the whole thing is so negative.
>
> I really think it's a shame that all this time was spent and at the end of it, "Well, you realize that we have to find something to criticize. If I don't find something to criticize in this evaluation, they send it back to me."... And I said "Okay." And she said, "Well, what should we put down?" So I said, "Put this down." ... I don't think that that's really productive evaluation when they have to find something bad to say about you.
>
> Principals were instructed to make recommendations to teachers ... and so you doctor up something.
>
> Also, I believe that in our system, our district office administrators prefer to see...negatives. I guess what they're saying is, "No one can be perfect and therefore this evaluation has got to include a more negative portion as well."
>
> I thought it was so ridiculous [having to find a target area]...I was sort of insulted by it.

Teachers who identified areas for personal professional growth during the evaluation process perceived that these areas were then recast in a negative light.

> What bothers me is that according to our document and according to our superintendent, recommendations can never be positive, it has to go against you. You see, it goes in recommendations, "This is what you should do." Well, it's not what I should do. It's what I choose to do because I am a professional. Give me credit, a little shot in the arm, a little acknowledgment saying, "This teacher has the courage to continue growing." That's the way it should be approached to me. I hate that thing. I feel like I'm talking to a machine.

Teachers also felt that formal observations of their classrooms created an artificial situation.

> The way my classes are run, it's not a true evaluation either because as soon as a child feels the presence of an administrator or whoever is doing the evaluation is in the classroom the whole tone changes; they're not nearly as free as they are when it's just me—and neither am I—so they don't really get a true feel for what goes on in the classroom.

These formal observations were also seen as inhibited risk taking by teachers. There was a sense of lesson presentations which were not authentic.

> You know, if the principal is going to be in there you're not going to try and bake some fancy soufflé, you're going to go with meat and potatoes. Just like if you were going to have some people over for dinner would you try and cook the hardest thing you could possibly imagine to cook just to take a risk? No, you're going to do something that you're reasonably confident is going to work.

The document used in evaluation was discussed in terms of sources of input and language.

> If you have an evaluation that you can read and understand and it's meaningful to you, you can make some changes in your teaching technique and skills and things like that. I think you get a whole raft of paper as in the old evaluation, and you tend to wrap it all up in one. What is it really saying? Well, that's what I do anyway, lump it all into one and then sort of say, now, what is that I'm supposed to be improving on, or you know, it makes it more difficult, I think.
>
> The instruments were all very principal-oriented in the sense that they did all the observing and teachers had no input in it.
>
> Objectives that are listed are not listed qualitatively in the sense of "excellent, poor, average," they're listed as a checklist of "observed, not observed, or not applicable." And I appreciate that in the sense that "is knowledgeable about the curriculum" has been observed; they've seen it but it hasn't been evaluated as "superb or poor or needs improvement"... I appreciate the way that the form is filled because the comments can flow from that.

Overall, teachers were quite critical of the evaluation structure. They objected to the fact that all teachers were treated the same with no regard for differences in experience, teaching assignment, or teaching style. They felt that there was little flexibility in the structure of evaluation to allow for individual contexts, and indeed this fact prompted the teachers of Prairie West elementary school to initiate a review of teacher evaluation in their school. Finally, there was a general dissatisfaction with a process based on a deficit model of evaluation. For teachers, there was a sense that the evaluation did little to improve their teaching.

As noted above, district administrators thought that the current evaluation policy and process did allow the board to have a process of accountability. They noted that even though legal concerns were very low, it was important to have an evaluation policy that ensured accountability and would stand up at a board of review. Concern was expressed that the current evaluation policy and process did not foster professional growth. If professional growth was not being fostered through evaluation, perhaps there needed to be an evaluation process separate from any purpose related to growth. Issues of what constituted the moral parameters of practice and how we judged accountability in varied situations were raised. Questions were raised also concerning the relationship of teacher evaluation to other district initiatives.

In Prairie West, concern about the district's process had led to school changes in the process. There had been concern that the district's instrument focussed on some areas that were not important and did not make a difference in classrooms. The administrator noted that while he had no difficulty with the "basic philosophy of the district policy," he found "the instrument too cumbersome." Prairie West had developed a different process that allowed more teacher choice of what was observed and a self-reflection by the teacher. There was still a concern that recommendations were required. The principal saw this as negative. Roselawn administrators expressed fewer concerns with the process but worked with teachers to foster professional growth through other means. They felt evaluations gave them an opportunity to know their teachers.

Time

Both the length of the evaluation form and the time that evaluations took contributed to a sense of wasted administrative time.

> And it's silly to have all these administrators tied up for hours and hours and hours going through all of those pages [on the evaluation form]. And I'm sure they agree. I'm sure that when they see some people that they have to evaluate that they think, "What a waste of time. I'm in that classroom so often and I know."

> It takes a lot of time on the part of our assistant principal and the principal which I sometimes think might be better spent working with children. Because of the need to satisfy the once-in-three-years formal evaluation they really have less time to teach, less time to interact more freely with the children. I guess it's a cumbersome instrument which takes a lot of time.

> I don't think it's fair.... There are so many demands on [the principal] that I know if I ask him to come down to my room for half an hour to share with us and be part of, where he can help the kids grow and can give me feedback, if I do that, it'll be very difficult for him to find the time. There's something wrong with that.

> We have some individuals who have been here for three years here at our school who do not have a permanent contract and this is the third year they have to be evaluated by this lengthy process again and I think that's redundant. I don't think that needs to be done.

> It wouldn't affect my teaching but I guess I would want a record of the job that I have done.

Criticism also focused on the linear time, the frequency of evaluation.

> To get it once every three years for one period seems very minute in the whole scheme of things.

> I don't think it's necessary to have it every three years.... I think every five years is fine.

Teachers found the process tedious, time-consuming, and a waste of human resources. This was particularly objectionable because teachers felt the process did little or nothing to promote teacher growth.

Administrators in both schools acknowledged the tremendous demands on their time as a result of evaluations. In Prairie West the principal and the assistant principal are usually involved in each teacher's evaluation. The principal wants to be "visible" and to have "a sense of the pulse of the school" in addition to his work in evaluation. In Roselawn the administrative team divided up the evaluation requirements. They both acknowledged the heavy time commitment required, noting that an evaluation process takes about six weeks to complete and that documents up to 24 pages are produced.

Impact of Evaluation

Teachers felt that the evaluation was an important tool for making administrators and district office personnel more aware of what was going on in the classrooms. However, the major positive impact of evaluation for teachers seemed to be one of affirmation of one's teaching practice and bringing to awareness those things one has taken for granted. This was often heightened by the inclusion of a self-evaluation section in the evaluation document.

> I feel very confident in my teaching skills that I have and I really like it when other teachers and my administration can come in and see what I'm doing because I really feel it validates what I'm doing.

> This recent one made me really sit down and think about my teaching because there was a self-evaluation section. And, if anything, that affected my ability to begin to establish my philosophy. I could be focusing on general changes, e.g., regular goal setting, not perhaps day-to-day changes.

> The self-evaluation allowed me to step back and take a look at what was occurring that was successful and what was occurring that could be improved upon.

> If you're doing it as a self-evaluation, and looking at it and thinking about it, and you're sweating over it and you're stewing over it, that's when you grow, that's when you change.

Some teachers felt that the evaluation process led to some improvement of specific teaching techniques.

> I really try to concentrate more on the things that they think could be improved and I guess I'm just like the kids. Whenever I get a little bit of praise then I still try harder.

> I do believe it was helpful insofar as through discussion we were able to determine ways in which I might vary or perhaps elicit more out of the children.

Overall, the clear indication from teachers is that evaluation had little or no lasting impact on their teaching.

> I have never found that I received a great deal of information from my evaluation, I have always looked on it as a summative activity that had to be done every three years...and let's just get it over with and that's it, and I don't get particularly wound up about it now. But I also don't find that I really get an awful lot of benefit from it.

> I'd say probably throughout the year in my day-to-day teaching I don't think that it had a large effect. My lesson planning and behavior management continued to grow. The evaluation did not produce change here. However, it was confidence building afterwards because the feedback was founded on specific observations.

> To me, evaluation doesn't affect my teaching. And maybe because I've not had any serious recommendations to deal with. Because I think if I did, then I'd really have to look at the way I teach.

> Not very much, to be honest with you...I don't feel there's a great deal of feedback given to me that I could use in terms of further development.

In Prairie West, there was a sense that the administrator felt that considerable professional development was part of the evaluation process. However, the view was also expressed that in terms of accountability administration already knew which teachers were in difficulty, and the evaluation process did not help them identify these teachers. In Roselawn the view was expressed that the teacher evaluation process had no impact on classroom practice.

Emotional Impact

Teachers consistently reported that the evaluation process was stressful. Many teachers had a sense of foreboding.

> And then all of a sudden the year comes and the month comes and the week comes and the day comes, "I'm being evaluated."

> Teachers who are exceptional teachers, who are up for an award, they're quaking in their boots when they have an evaluation too. It's nuts. It shouldn't be like that. I'm not sure that every time you're evaluated that it should go on record.

> I don't care how much experience you have. I don't care how much confidence you have. It still is a threatening situation.

> Beforehand, perhaps about two days beforehand, the knot in my belly started to rise because I knew it was coming.

In determining the source of the stress, teachers identified what they called the subjective nature of both teaching and the evaluation process.

> I think teaching is fairly unique in that way in that what's good often about what the teacher does in the classroom is so terribly subjective.

> They [the evaluators] are out of the classroom, so that they don't realize or you're afraid they might not realize that if all of a sudden somebody decides to do something uncalled for in the back of the room or whatever, that they might think it was because I'm not a good teacher that this child has decided to act out and you're afraid maybe they will look at it that way because you never know when a child is going to take it upon himself to act out. And you're anxious. You keep saying, "Oh please let this class be good."

> That's another problem. How come somebody can have five evaluations that are good, then they get a principal that they don't like or doesn't like them, and that guy gives them a lousy evaluation, then a district wants to get rid of a person.... Evaluations are so subjective.

Informal visitations were often seen as a means of recognizing and appreciating the work of the teacher, while formal evaluations were viewed as times when a teacher's work may be criticized.

> If somebody drops in while I'm teaching, that's a completely different feeling. It's almost a feeling that somebody has come to appreciate you. Whereas when they come to evaluate you, it's the opposite feeling; they're coming to pick apart, even though the administrators make it very clear that's not what they're there for.

> When someone is there observing me I feel like I'm not doing as well as usual.

These are interesting comments in light of the fact that although teachers felt vulnerable because of the subjective nature of evaluation, there was little indication that any of the participants felt that they had been treated unfairly in past evaluations.

Sources of Professional Growth and Development

A theme that emerged over and over again was that evaluation did nothing to promote professional growth, although the teachers did identify many sources of professional growth and development. Of prime importance were the opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation.

> Probably the greatest impact in teaching, for me, has been any area that has facilitated self-evaluation.... I self-evaluate daily and almost minute by minute depending on how a particular lesson is going. I take the time to sit back and write professional journals.

In Prairie West teachers worked with an evaluation form that a staff committee had modified and that contained a self-evaluation section.

> This recent one made me really sit down and think about my teaching because there was a self-evaluation section. And, if anything, that affected my ability to begin to establish my philosophy. I could be focusing on general changes, for example, goal setting, not perhaps day-to-day changes.

> I think it has to be me. I think it has to be teachers, again, reflecting. I don't think that any instrument or any evaluation process is going to help somebody who isn't ready, who can't do it because they don't have the inner will or even the inner knowledge about how to go about it.

> I try to write a couple of times a week [in a journal].... Another teacher on staff really helps me, keeping my habit motivated because we actually trade the journals now and then and comment back and forth, which is interesting.... It's also quite exciting to get the feedback from someone else as well as what they're thinking and experiencing too.

In addition, teachers often cited colleagues as a source of growth. Interacting with other professionals—observing them teach, cooperative planning, interactive feedback and/or journals, professional discussions—appeared to be a critical factor to reflection and growth.

> One of the things that changed my teaching practices was the fact that there were so many student teachers that I had...that kind of kept me current.

> Observe different teachers...I found that if you picked the right one you could glean so much from them.

> On the other hand, we are given absolutely no credit for the work that we do ourselves because we like teaching. Usually, you co-teach, you cross-teach with another teacher whom you like, their discipline class style, their presentation of material, and you share something in common. Well, that becomes an automatic evaluation. You evaluate the material; you evaluate the lessons; you evaluate each other. It's a very comfortable, growing system because two people are making that personal commitment by themselves with no upward direction. And it doesn't go anywhere as far as evaluation to paper; it goes to teacher growth. Now to me, that can even just simply be acknowledged.

> I've always had positive evaluations.... But as far as me growing, I've grown more from attending in-services, talking to other teachers who are teaching the same thing, finding out what do you do for science, how do you teach this.... I've learned more from teachers I've worked with more than I ever did from any evaluation.

> We've done a little bit of the TEP (Teacher Effectiveness Program) in our school as well and that's not really intended as an evaluation, but it is intended to help us become more effective. So we have been somewhat involved in observing in other classrooms and then, through discussion, seeing what is positive and seeing what works with other teachers. So through ongoing discussions I feel that I have gained. Just by observing I have found that different teachers teach somewhat differently. I have been able to use some of their ideas and they have used some of mine, and it has worked quite favorably.

> I think back to my student teaching, back to teachers I've learned from. It was me doing something with them or observing them doing something and me being involved in that process, not just sitting out evaluation or watching, it was being brought into the learning process.

> I work with teachers not only from my own school but other schools as well. So you get different ideas. And definitely that changes your teaching.

A wide variety of sources of teacher development continued to be identified; insight gained through the experience of mothering, attending workshops, seminars or inservices, collaborative work, change in programs and/or teaching locations, and developing workshops, and so forth.

> I think having your own children and staying home with them and raising them and feeling, getting that motherhood thing going inside you and then coming back to school, you have a whole different approach. You understand the children better, you understand the parents better because you can see the emotional involvement they have and you can put yourself in their place and empathize with the problems they're having. I find myself much less judgmental of the parents who are making mistakes because of the struggles I had with my own children and much better able to understand how important it is for the parents to come to school and be reinforced that what they're doing is good. And how important it is for the children to be given the positive feedback they need and the encouragement they need.

> I have learned a great deal from my students, you know, we have a problem together, and we work it out, and I see a need with my students and I read a lot or I attend conferences, talk to the teachers, and so forth, and just try to work that out, and changes that I have made in my teaching have always been as the result of a need that I perceived in the classroom...there isn't going to be someone in there day in and day out, just you and the children for responses to what you're doing and how it's been handled and take it from there.

> I like to keep moving all the time...I'm constantly searching.... I don't know what I'm looking for but I'm searching.... I think change is very important. It's uncomfortable sometimes but it's very important.

There was a strong sense that teachers needed to pursue these diverse routes because they were all different people. The element of choice and self direction seemed very strong.

Teacher Involvement in Evaluation

This theme highlighted the degree to which teachers were involved in the development of an evaluative process and also the degree to which teachers participated in the process of evaluation. The comments of the teacher participants from the two schools differed to the extent that they constituted distinct subthemes: that teachers were not participants in the process of evaluation; and that when teachers were given the opportunity to participate in the process of evaluation, it was in the process itself where the most was learned. This variance in thinking between Prairie West and Roselawn was based on Prairie West's development of its own evaluative document.

> I'm very frustrated by what I hear coming from district office. A lot of top-down decisions. A school administration's hands are often tied. The teachers and school administrators have very little input into the decision making process. It's very frustrating.
>
> Definitely top-down. No doubt about it. Sure they ask for input and there's a teacher or whatever on the committee, but basically it's top-down.
>
> It was the process that we went through and all the discussions that we had and all the arguing back and forth. And if you feel kind of this way about something you have to decide how important it is to you and you have to sort of take a stand. And by having to take a stand you have to argue it through out loud. And, of course, that's the best way to set something in your mind. And I think that because of that I just feel much more sure, much more positive about my feelings now rather than being so wishy-washy...because I've worked through the process, I feel definite. I have definite ideas.
>
> We own it. We had the input. We know what's there. We've given the assent to what's there.

In addition to these school differences, some teachers commented on other aspects of their participation in the process. These comments set out the parameters of their participation *and* their feelings about this participatory role.

> And he asked for my self-evaluation of the situation and what I thought went well and was weak. And I felt very confident and comfortable to let him know what I thought worked well and what I thought I had planned for that should have worked well and didn't. It was a very comfortable setting.
>
> I think the only way you can get a super evaluation is to admit some of your feelings and start working and trying to improve them, but it's a different perspective if you yourself say, "I have this feeling, and I'm willing to work this, and I feel comfortable talking about this" than it is for somebody to come and say, "There's this wrong with you and there's that, and this is missing, and that's missing."
>
> I was asked this past year, and I thought it was a really good question, "What do you think you do well? What do you want to work on?" I thought that was great. Every year I try to pick a different area for me to grow in. And I don't think it's anybody else's job but mine to seek out how I'm going to interpret that, where I'm going to get my information, how I'm going to research it, what's going to change. But I think I should be accountable for that.

The teachers expressed general dissatisfaction with the current process of evaluation. While they acknowledged that it affirmed what they did well, they went on to express their views that the process was at best a waste of time and at worst a negative, stressful experience. But during the course of the study the participants began to imagine a different process of evaluation, one that may be difficult for many administrators and teachers because of the greater responsibility they must shoulder but that offers exciting possibilities.

Hopes and Dreams

Through the course of discussions, considerable enthusiasm was generated regarding the possibilities for the future of teacher evaluation. Teachers who had prior experience working on teacher evaluation committees expressed the importance and relevance of personal involvement in the process. Teachers began awakening to a reconceptualization of accountability that centered on the demonstration of professional growth.

> I would like to be able to evaluate myself and say, "Okay, these are the areas I want to focus on in the upcoming year." And then we have somebody look at it—go through it with me.... [They could then] understand the whole process...then say "Yes, you're doing this great or have you tried this?" and appreciate what I'm doing.
>
> They should be looking at developing you as a teacher...it should be an evaluation that challenges you to grow.

A wide variety of sources of teacher development, insight, and growth were often achieved for the teacher participants through such diverse experiences as mothering, teacher collaboration, team teaching, and reflective practice.

> I think it would be good somehow if we could see what other people are going through and how demanding different roles are.
>
> To me, it's important to run that by somebody, to talk with an equal about that.
>
> I think it has to be me. I think it has to be teachers. Again, reflecting. I don't think that any instrument or any evaluation process is going to help somebody who isn't ready, who can't do it because they don't have the inner will or even the inner knowledge about how to go about it.
>
> I think the self-evaluation aspect of it is far more important, because we have to live with ourselves; we have to live within our classrooms all the time. We know when things are going well or not, and we should be the ones

> who are proactive and looking for change when something's not working.

Self-evaluation was viewed as helpful and full of critical teacher information. This *looking at self* appeared to meet the needs of teachers and provided a greater picture of the individual involved. Teachers questioned if such a model could be built into the culture of the school/district. There was a strong sense that teachers needed opportunities to pursue avenues that would be of strong personal benefit—they are all unique individuals with differing needs and abilities.

> We would very much like to have teachers talking and dialoguing with one another and with us [administrators] about how to improve their teaching and make things better in our school and in general for kids.
>
> They [evaluators] sort of have to trust [teachers].
>
> Let people have a little bit of flexibility.

Although the elements of choice and self-direction were perceived as important, this was tempered by a belief that schools and districts should have a common vision. The teachers were exploring ways the evaluation process could be linked to, and supportive of, school goals.

> I think the principal should sit down with his teachers one by one and talk to them and about them as professionals. The principal might have an overall vision of where the school is going...that's some kind of instructional leadership.

All participants agreed that the present practice of teacher evaluation needed to be reshaped. It was understood that a guarantee be given to teachers that they would be allowed enough time to work out their reconceptualization of evaluation. All voices needed to be heard and have input. The purpose of evaluation must be established and a useful growth mechanism developed. Teachers' criticisms of the current evaluation system should not be mistaken for a desire on their part to eliminate teacher evaluation or to escape accountability. On the contrary, teachers seemed dismayed about the general lack of opportunity to demonstrate accountability. They saw a need for a fair process that suited the needs of the stakeholders. In parallel, there may be a need for a range of evaluations to meet the needs of the individuals. In group interviews, several stories emerged about receiving support for courses, materials, workshops, and release time, but never about being asked what had been learned and how they were using it, let alone how they shared these learnings with others. There was no link between such activities and the evaluation process. What the teachers so strenuously objected to was being held accountable for very basic things that did not recognize their growth. The teacher participants expressed a strong excitement and willingness to pursue the need for future action and to aid in the development of an evaluative practice that had purpose and meaning for all.

The district administrators expressed the hope that a way could be found to connect teacher evaluation with school improvement plans. They hoped connections could be forged between a school's philosophy, its curriculum philosophy, teacher evaluation, and professional development. They also expressed a hope that a suitable evaluation policy and process could be created that would satisfy demands for accountability, that would be fair and consistent, and that would require much less time commitment from teachers and school administrators. They also talked about ways of turning attention from teaching to concerns about learning and the ways such considerations would reshape teacher evaluation.

Prairie West's administrator expressed a hope to link a collaboratively developed school development plan with evaluation and professional development.

Conclusion

> I would like to be able to evaluate myself and say, "Okay these are the areas I want to focus on in the upcoming year." And then we have somebody look at it—go through it with me.... [They could then] understand the whole process...then say, "Yes, you're doing this great or have you tried this?" and appreciate what I'm doing.
>
> I think the principal should sit down with his teachers one by one and talk to them and about them as professionals. The principal might have an overall vision of where the school is going...that's some kind of instructional leadership.

These two quotations highlight the confusion in purpose the teachers in this study felt about evaluation, but they also highlight the teachers' views about the possibilities for change. Teachers are often seen as defensive about their practices or as trying to shirk their responsibilities when they speak out against teacher evaluation policies and processes or when they silently rage at the waste of resources on evaluation. The teachers in this study, as these two quotations illustrate, are seeking a more meaningful kind of accountability. What they are seeking is a kind of evaluation process that is situated in their particular practices and connected to overall school plans, visions, and philosophies.

The teachers viewed teacher evaluation as they had experienced it as somehow disconnected from the experienced curriculum they were constructing in their classrooms. It was a process disconnected for the most part from their teaching, from their professional growth, from the ongoing process of school and curriculum change and development. The teachers indicated in their conversations with us that evaluation had little or no impact on their teaching, that they wanted to make commitments to their professional growth and improvement as teachers, and they wanted their personal professional growth to be connected with school improvement and growth. Furthermore, they indicated that they wanted to be accountable to the commitments they made to their own professional growth and to their school's purposes for improving learning for children. Rather than trying to avoid accountability, they wanted more input into establishing their own professional growth connected to school plans for development.

What the teachers were suggesting as important changes to the way teacher evaluation was conceptualized and carried out in the district was not unlike what we heard from school and district administrators. The school administrators seemed to be making the best of the current policies. There was a sense they were trying to encourage as much professional growth and development as they could while they worked within a policy that appeared weighted heavily toward accountability and a deficit view of teachers. The teachers and administrators seemed to be pushing to make whatever positive links they could to the improvement of classroom and school practices through the evaluation policies and practices.

As we talked with district administrators, we learned of many positive moves to create a district ethos that fostered teaching and learning and created positive educative experiences for children in the schools. Teacher evaluation did not seem to be tied in to this overall district plan. The district administrators were open to considering ways they could work with teachers, school administrators, children, parents, and other stakeholders to do so. Although they had initially adopted their evaluation policy quickly, they were now considering new possibilities.

The teachers and administrators in this case study have the imagination, enthusiasm, and commitment to begin to undertake the task of reconceptualizing teacher evaluation. It will require support from their school board, Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, and other stakeholder groups to realize, in this and other jurisdictions, the possibilities they are envisioning.

Chapter 14

A Case Study of the Chinook School Division

Chinook School Division is typical of many rural school jurisdictions in Alberta in that it covers a wide geographical area with a small population variously clustered into small communities engaged in combinations of farming, lumbering, oil exploration, and associated service industries. There are three senior administrators in its central office. The consultant function is shared among teachers throughout the jurisdiction who have been given some release time for that purpose. Until recently the division was greatly affected by frequent teacher turnover.

Like many other jurisdictions, Chinook School Division had a policy of teacher evaluation where evaluations were the responsibility of the superintendent or associate superintendent. In this case, the associate superintendent was responsible for all personnel matters including teacher evaluation. With potentially over 175 evaluations in any one year, the final reports were usually based on one formal classroom visit. Neither of the senior administrators was satisfied with this procedure, and so the policy was changed to make supervision the responsibility of the principal and summative evaluations the responsibility of central office administrators. Anxious to make this additional task a reasonable one, the committee that developed the policy favored checklists and written explanations. With a change in superintendents, the policy was reviewed and extended to include a section on supervision and on formative and summative evaluation. Principals were given responsibility for supervision and evaluation, and the format of the final form was also changed from a checklist to a blank sheet. Although evaluation was viewed as important and in line with mandated policy so that over time all teachers were reviewed, the superintendent saw it as the least effective method for teacher growth. In contrast, he thought that formative supervision that used a clinical supervision cycle was much more informal and continuous and oriented toward professional development.

The Teacher Evaluation Policy

The jurisdiction's teacher evaluation policy is entitled "Supervision of Instruction" and highlights the importance of teacher evaluation in enhancing the quality of education, maintaining high standards, and improving teacher effectiveness. Evaluation, written feedback from supervisors, was to be constructive and emphasize teacher growth. Further the policy confirmed that "school administrators as instructional leaders must set as their highest priority their active involvement in the supervision of the learning environments in their schools."

The policy document notes that "there is a clear and marked division" between formative and summative supervision. Formative supervision is defined as:

> supervision that is, as a general rule, designed to change or modify the style or structure of instruction with a view to improve the learning environment. Its purpose is to help the teacher improve the learning environment, not to judge it. Techniques such as peer supervision, ITEP and clinical supervision are often used in formative supervision.

Summative supervision has a judgmental focus. It is defined as:

> a cycle of supervision that judges the work of a teacher in creating his/her learning environment and in contributing to the educational environment of the school. It is a condition of employment and represents part of the teacher's employment history. Further its appraisal instruments are consistent with the job and have well understood techniques for measurement.

The document then specifies "it is the responsibility of the superintendent to see that summative evaluation is carried out, in most situations the school based administration will have the task of summative evaluation delegated to him or her." The criteria to be used in summative evaluation are in five major categories identified as: instructional skills, classroom management skills, expertise in basic skills and subject areas, student-teacher relationships, and personal and professional qualities. A variety of criteria are suggested under each category.

The process requires "a series of conferences and observations" beginning with an initial meeting to set out expectations and followed by a minimum of four observations of the teacher in the classroom. Each observation is to be preceded by a preconference and followed by a postconference, and the final report is to be discussed with the teacher. The final summation is on a binary scale of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

The evaluation of teachers is to follow the following sequence: teachers new to the division, teachers eligible for permanent certification, teachers new to a school from within the division, and all teachers on a three-year cycle.

The Impact of the Policy

In the initial years following the introduction of the policy, principals had a large number of evaluations to complete because many teachers in the jurisdiction had never been evaluated. There are still sufficient new teachers and teacher transfers for evaluation to take a substantial amount of the principal's time. No principal mentioned being given extra administrative time to complete these additional duties.

Although the first principals involved in teacher evaluation policy changes in 1991 had the opportunity to attend some inservice sessions on teacher evaluation, those appointed more recently have had to obtain their own professional development. One of the difficulties mentioned was the lack of shared information about the procedures various principals used. Another was that some principals were uncertain about some of the legal ramifications of the policy. One principal had written a glowing evaluation on an excellent teacher. At the bottom of the document the principal felt that a rating of Satisfactory did not capture the excellence of the teacher's work and so had used the term *excellent*, which had been used throughout the document. His lack of information about the status of the document would suggest that the legal nature of the final report should be reviewed with principals, and in particular those appointed after the initial implementation of the policy.

Some principals felt that the detailed procedures laid out in the document did not allow for any flexibility in the school setting. Principals who knew their teachers well through frequent visits to the classroom felt as frustrated by these procedures as did those who knew the work of specialist teachers through means other than direct classroom observation.

Putting the Policy into Practice

One principal suggested that because the previous policy had all but ignored making reference to supervisory activity, the incoming central office administrator had wanted to focus on this area while retaining the requirement that principals complete formal evaluations. One of the difficulties with the policy is that although both formative and summative supervision are defined, they lack some clarity and consistency in their application. Although the term *summative supervision* is defined and is the term used in describing the process to be followed, the intervening sections on the person responsible for carrying this out and the criteria to be used in measurement refer to summative *evaluation*. It would seem from the document that these terms are interchangeable.

The other area of potential ambiguity is the reference to the purpose of formative supervision as "helping the teacher to improve the learning environment but not to judge it." It would seem that the intent of the statement is that a formal evaluation report is not required, but in the absence of this statement there is some suggestion that it is possible to help a teacher improve a situation without judging it. Another principal explained:

> If there is a concern, then it wouldn't get noted on paper but the next time I meet with the teacher if he/she is on my supervisory list, I bring it up then. If it is someone who is not on my list because I am not doing a formal evaluation that year, then with some I make a minute to pull them aside during the day and mention it; with others I will let it slide and not get back to them again.

For the principal these observations were both formative and judgmental.

The third area of difficulty identified relates to the use of a clinical supervisory cycle to evaluate teachers, a process that is also identified as a technique of formative supervision. Principals found it confusing that the same cycle could be used in both instances and even "congruently" according to the policy. One principal thought that the central office administration expected

> all the evaluation to involve a clinical supervision cycle for visits where you are talking to the teacher beforehand, you are going over those things, you are going to observe, and get some feedback. But what they say and underline is a policy that states that anything found in a supervisory manner must not be used in an evaluation without the teacher's permission. So in a lot of people's minds, and still somewhat in mine, this is a foggy area.

This issue revolved around the predicament of how to help a teacher on a formative supervisory cycle when summative evaluation was also required. One suggested:

> The hot word is *formative* and I think it's probably the best thing if you really want to make a difference to a teacher, but if I am going into a classroom where I have already identified the teacher as having problems and the formative means has been completed and it's nearing the end of this whole evaluation phase, then it's most likely it will be summative, because even though you say you are doing something formative you have summative thoughts, you have to produce a summative document on this teacher for contractual purposes so everything is leading that way.

One administrator explained that the present superintendent had tried to make the distinction between evaluation and supervision clearer but "the policy requires judgment, is the teacher satisfactory or not, even the way the policy is worded and the approach they are outlining, suggests to me that they are not really clear on the two." Asked to describe the difference between the two terms, another administrator explained:

> I'm still not clear in my head where the formative and summative is. I think it is right back there with what you are going into the classroom for. If someone has complained about a teacher and I go in there, then it's summative and if something is identified that could be stronger, then it becomes formative. Formative can lead to summative and summative can lead to formative. There is a summative document produced that is based on formative and summative procedures, so I wouldn't put one before the other.

This analysis is similar to the comment of the teacher who noted that on his arrival "I understood that there would be a distinction between formative and summative evaluations, but what we're understanding now is that there is no distinction—they are all sort of built into the same process." Asked whether drop-ins to classrooms would be seen as formative or summative, one principal explained: "It's not possible to do both formative and summative together. I have never had difficulty with dropping into classrooms, and I think it is only natural that I would be in those classrooms, and if I see something good going on, it gets noted."

Another administrator asked the same question concluded that for him these short visits were not for evaluation. In his experience, teachers saw these visits as

> somebody cares enough to come in and see what I'm doing. If I go somewhere and see something that I like, I put a note in the mailbox. It's not evaluation, it's basic stroking and teachers don't get enough of it. For some teachers when it is their turn for evaluation, it is the first time in three years that they have received anything positive.

Other principals had similar opinions about the importance of frequently being in classrooms. A classroom teacher gave both terms a new twist:

> Well, informal would be just walking in, getting a feel for what's going on. Summative, it's like we sit down and do the final discussion. I think when I had the evaluations it wasn't so much until the very end when we went over the final evaluations that it was summative. During the whole thing it was a bit of both. At times we were looking for formal things, but because of our personalities it was very relaxed, and to me too that's the idea of summative and the other formative/informal is a major aspect of it but is much more relaxed.

These principals expressed confusion about the terms in the policy, and all had developed specific procedures that fulfilled the requirements of policy from their perspective.

The Three School Sites

Following initial discussions with the senior administrators, a formal letter was sent requesting permission for access to three schools in the jurisdiction. The associate superintendent discussed which schools might be appropriate and convenient and in the course of our conversation mentioned every school in the division as a possible school site. In the end, because there were no grades 7-9 schools in the jurisdiction, two elementary schools and one grades 4-12 school were chosen. The principals of the three schools were pleased to be part of the study and went out of their way to make our visits enjoyable and productive. Subsequent interviews were held with the senior administrators prior to visiting the schools.

Aspenview Elementary School

Aspenview Elementary School is a modern one-storey brick building on the edge of a small farming community. It is surrounded by a large playground for approximately 300 children in years 1 to 3 who attend the school, many of whom are bussed in from the surrounding area. At the front of the school is the requisite parking for school buses.

The school itself was designed with the children in mind. Once through the large entry with its spaces for boots, the hallways are wide and welcoming, displaying many examples of children's work. This attention to displaying and celebrating aspects of the children's lives is continued in the classroom. The desks are arranged in small clusters, and the many windows help give the school its bright, cheerful atmosphere.

The school office is just inside the main doors and is also decorated with posters. Some of these are similar to others seen throughout the school. The principal, Ms. Salter, Pat to her staff, explained that they all dealt with size and proportion. Made by the teachers, they are placed throughout the school to reinforce the concept. Another noticeable feature is the long line of well-thumbed books on top of the filing cabinets. These are reference books for the staff and parents on all aspects of reading, mathematics, and skill development in the primary years.

The staff room, which is adjacent to the office, is a large comfortable room with a cluster of couches and chairs around a coffee table as the focal point and a number of other smaller seating areas to each side. The notice board holds references to upcoming meetings and provincial notices, but the chalk board is where most of the daily information is assembled: who is helping in the school, changes in timetabling, suggestions for staff meetings, and requests for materials. Curriculum materials are available on the coffee table, and a magazine rack is well stocked with professional literature. Along one wall is the sink, refrigerator, and coffee pot.

The Principal and Professional Development

The reference materials in the school office were only one indication of this principal's interest in professional development. Curriculum materials were very evident in the staff room as were magazines, many opened to particular articles. On one of our visits there was a problem for teachers to solve on the chalkboard in the staff room. As part of a focus on problem solving, teachers decided that students should be given a problem to solve by the end of each day. The principal decided to provide a similar challenge for the teachers.

This school had moved to program continuity but not until the teachers, the principal, and the community had spent considerable time talking about its implications and what it would mean for day to day planning. The teachers had adopted a whole language approach that was proving successful. As well, they had begun a program that provided daily intensive tutoring for short periods for children who needed extra language development. The amount of research evidence, which indicated that "holding back students" did little to enhance their language development compared with helping the child rework those skills where there was weakness, convinced them to begin the tutoring program. The specialist teacher and the principal trained anyone willing to participate in the program, and their volunteers included not only parents but the school secretary and the custodian.

Prior to implementation of both the whole language and the tutor programs, and as part of their continuing learning, teachers had read and critiqued a number of texts and research articles on these subjects. They also gathered data to monitor their own progress through teacher-designed and published tests. Asked whether she had chosen the articles and given them to the teachers to read, the principal pointed out that to do so was tantamount to telling the teachers they were deficient in this area and needed to know more. Instead she shared what she had read informally in the staff room and then invited others to read the article if they wished.

In many ways, this principal indicated her support for a learning environment that engaged teachers as well as students. In one of her conversations in the staff room she included references to things she had read that challenged or puzzled her. She asked for others' opinions and the conversation quickly became a discussion among a number of staff. At the same time, the easygoing nature of the conversation reflected the casual comfort of the teachers in moving from a discussion of curriculum alternatives in mathematics to asking who had seen a child's boots.

The principal spent much time moving from class to class providing encouragement to individual children. Coming for a visit, as she called it, it was evident that the teachers were not only comfortable but also supportive of her popping in. Because of the size of the staff, she was frequently able to provide direct feedback in an informal fashion.

The Teacher Evaluation Policy in Practice

Because of the ongoing support she gave her teachers, the principal did not worry about the distinctions between supervision and evaluation. Yet because the changes to the policy left much discretion in the procedures used, Ms. Salter pointed out that one learned what an appropriate evaluation looked like by trial and error. "We have never been shown an example of what they should be like. All we got was the blank document with nothing on it and no discussion of what would be on it," she said as she explained her discomfort with the amount of assistance principals had received. "It's just a blank form that we write on. I think there is so much latitude. But as a group we seldom discuss it."

All teachers have a copy of the policy and the evaluation form in their handbooks, and at the beginning of the year the principal makes another copy and discusses the process with those teachers due to be evaluated. As part of the discussion,

> we pick the dates that I am going to be in the classroom. I don't like that a lot but it does schedule my time. Some people like that and other people say, "No, just tell me the week or whatever, we don't have to set up a certain time." So we set that up and at that time when I talk about the policy with them, the one thing I really emphasize is the difference between supervision and evaluation, and I tell them I will not use situations where they come to me with a problem or for help in the document. That to me is the biggest thing that I have to verify with staff and I tell them right then that it's an awkward position for me to be in and most of them can appreciate that I am going to evaluate them but I am also going to help them.

Next year she proposed not to link supervision and evaluation together at all, but to do the evaluations early in the year and then to supervise where she thought appropriate so that teachers would be clear on the distinctions. "That was evaluation, and now Ms. Salter is going to come in and videotape the class, and then we will sit down and talk about it."

Because of the amount of time she spent in classrooms, Ms. Salter found the formal visits frustrating:

> If I want to evaluate a teacher I don't think I have to spend a lot of time —four visits—sitting down with the teacher talking about the lesson they are going to put on. I think I am intuitive enough and I have enough personal knowledge and see enough classrooms, that I know a good class when I walk into it and I can easily pick up the things that I need to, and also through their planning documents and those other things that they share with me outside the classroom, that I don't think I need to follow a supervisory cycle of activities with them. I think I can easily get the information I need from my drop-in visits.

She went on to explain what she did when she observed a class.

> I guess what I tend to do when I go into the classroom is I hardly watch the teacher at all. I'm much more interested in the kids and I basically tune out the teacher and listen to what the kids are saying and how much time they have in everything that is going on, do they get to respond, whether they respond to each other. Always as I'm sitting there I'm starting to form an image in my mind of what it's like to be a child in that classroom. Am I able to have

> my opinions heard? Am I able to have my needs met? When I need help do I know what to do? and all those kinds of things. Then of course you look at the planning to see if they understand the curriculum and the kinds of activities they have made.

At the same time, she explained, she had empathy for the teacher in terms of whether he or she was nervous and whether it was a typical day in that classroom or whether her presence had added an element of which she should be aware. She was in classrooms frequently, and "most of the times the kids will start talking to me, or when they are doing an activity they will be over showing me what they are doing." Because of her focus of school-wide professional development, she was selective about working with individuals. She explained that she tended to give her neophyte teachers that time but noted that,

> the supervisory activities I do individually we can do as a group a lot of times and I don't think that the only time they are getting professional growth is when I'm there. I think there are a lot of different ways that we can access that in schools. I don't feel I'm letting these people down.

Asked about difficulties associated with the process, Ms. Salter spoke of one teacher in a previous year who had challenged her judgment. The teacher was in her first year in the jurisdiction and Ms. Salter thought she lacked some basic teaching behaviors like pacing and knowing when children needed a change of activity. The teacher, an older woman, "thought she was fine." The dilemma for Ms. Salter was that since the teacher was in her first year, a poor evaluation meant that the teacher would not have her contract renewed. "It started me thinking 'Well, maybe I don't know what good teaching is,' but I had enough experience and feedback from other people so that I knew it was not my expectations that were the problem." She asked the teacher if she wanted a second opinion but the teacher turned the option down. Ms. Salter suspected that the teacher thought the superintendent would follow the same line as herself because he was not going to question what the principal was saying and disrupt the system. The teacher was placed on probation and stayed for a second year before choosing to leave the system. Reflecting on the experience, Ms. Salter commented on the distrust that builds up in these situations and is never completely ameliorated. Although they parted on good terms, and the teacher had made substantial improvements during the year, Ms. Salter felt that the teacher still had misgivings: "I don't think she totally believed that I was actually right and I don't think she totally trusts me. In her letter of reference, I tried to communicate the positives as much as possible and not hurt her career. I was just trying to protect the children and fulfill my responsibility."

The Teachers' Experiences of Teacher Evaluation

Six teachers from the school agreed to be interviewed and to have their interviews recorded. These four women and two men included teachers who had been teaching for over 20 years and those with only a couple of years of teaching experience. Some had been in the jurisdiction prior to the development of the present teacher evaluation policy and could recall being evaluated under "the old system," whereas others had experienced being evaluated in other jurisdictions. Asked to speak about their experiences, except in one instance, their responses did not reflect the anxieties of the principals concerning formative and summative activities. Their descriptions are included under the following headings: the previous system, the present system, evaluation outcomes, the context of evaluation, and the context of the school.

The Previous System

Teachers referred to their previous experiences as "the old way," and it provided a context for their descriptions of more recent experiences.

One teacher who had been in the division for over 10 years spoke of the format of evaluation prior to the implementation of the 1985 policy when the "superintendent and the deputy did it and now it's principals." She described those first evaluations:

> When the superintendent and deputy came in, we didn't know when they were coming, we didn't know what they were looking for and it would be a nerve-racking situation since they came into the schools so seldom. When the superintendent came in, I had no idea he was coming in. He just walked into my class one day and stayed about 20 minutes and I was shocked, and then he left.

The teacher pointed out that in those days teachers new to the jurisdiction often had not met the senior staff, so "they'd come in and the teachers didn't even know who they were." Besides this stress for the teacher was the impact of "a horrendous turnover," so that large numbers of teachers were to be evaluated for contracts and permanent certification. Because the central office evaluator had observed her briefly when she first started, he told her that "it's physically impossible to see that many teachers. We haven't had any bad reports from anybody, no parents called in or anything, so we will just have to assume. We have to, we can't do any more."

These reactions were shared by others. Another veteran teacher noted, "When the evaluation policy changed, it was just like a sigh of relief." She went on to explain, "Now that we have switched to the principal doing the evaluation, it's more detailed and helpful than the 20 minutes we used to get from the superintendent or deputy superintendent. It used to be a kind of a fear thing."

This teacher described being evaluated previously in another jurisdiction by her principal, an experience she had found to be positive because "even the things that we had gone through, like areas to work on, were presented positively as 'These are the things we can work on,' and to me that was positive, but then I had seen her a number of times as well." She then described her first evaluation in the Chinook jurisdiction:

> When the deputy superintendent came in and sat at my desk and went through things—Oh! it was just scary, and after 20 minutes, he had filled out this form. I just found the whole thing really ridiculous. There were such picky things on the form—like 'uses legible printing or handwriting' and I had been printing on chart paper when he came in and it was marked off as not observed and it was the main activity I was doing with the kids.

The brevity of the visits and their importance in terms of the teacher's future were stressed by three other teachers.

> I think it was very unfair the way they used to pop in. "I'm here, I'm going to evaluate you," and your whole livelihood depends on this evaluation that is 10 minutes long and you have never seen the guy before, you don't have any preparation, you don't have any time to prepare for it.

> The superintendent used to come in for one 20-minute session and evaluate me for the year. The kids might be on an off day just before the holidays. I'm glad they stopped that and put it in the principal's hands.

> I've been evaluated many times where somebody comes into my classroom and usually I have not been told ahead of time. They will just pop in, and sit at the back of the room. They don't walk around and they don't have anything to do with students. They literally sit there and write and you feel like you are really sitting on the block, somebody is putting down everything, every word you say. It made me quite nervous. I wasn't warned ahead of time and I just felt they weren't there to help me or to really see any good that was being done. It was more or less to find out what I was doing wrong and I felt it was very cold. Someone who sits at the back with a clipboard gets that one half hour. It could be a bad day for me, a bad day for the students. Today my students are really wound up and I have a couple of low achievers in my class right now, plus some special needs children, so a day like today could be a bad day for a person who just walked in.

Teachers' feelings about these visits were succinctly captured by one teacher's story. She explained that the superintendent and deputy superintendent drove white trucks and when they arrived at the school, the word would pass from room to room because "you never knew if it was your day or not. Well, one day I did a terrible thing. I had come in from supervision and I went into the staff room and I said 'White truck!' and everybody jumped up and left. I was just kidding but it was terrible that we reacted like that."

The Present System

Teachers who had been in the jurisdiction prior to the introduction of the policy used these descriptions to contrast their present experiences. For them, the major change had been the transfer of the process to the principal. Asked about the specific policy, not all teachers remembered seeing the document and those who did were unsure of the details. One said, "There is something—it's quite long. I have it in my filing cabinet somewhere; that goes through quite detailed stuff, but it's not a picking out, checking off form like we used to have." Most often, they spoke about a series of formal and informal visits.

> Your principal comes in and sets up times with you beforehand and there are formal and informal ones and I think most people get two formals and four informals throughout the year. Before the formal ones we sat and talked about what I wanted her to observe and what I wanted her to look for and then we sat afterwards and then she told me what she had found in looking at that.

> Basically she does three different visits throughout the year. She checks through your unit plans and your day plans. She comes into the classroom

> We should be reevaluated every three years for summative evaluation, and the formative evaluation could occur more frequently than that.

> Pat showed us the paper and before she came in to see us, she explained it to us. I know I get evaluated every third year. She comes and observes a couple of times before she does the formal evaluation.

In comparison with their previous experiences, teachers preferred the present system. One identified a number of reasons. She had been involved in choosing the times for visits and knew the criteria, and because of her familiarity with the principal also helped.

> I think knowing your principal very well when she comes in, being more comfortable when she comes into the classroom because we know what she is looking for. We have a presession with her before she comes in. We know exactly what's going to go on when she comes in, and then after we can sit down and talk to her about what happened in there, and she does it another three times at least during the year and not the same time every time either. She wanted three different times: once she came in for centers, once she came in when I was doing a concept lesson with the children, and I think one time she came in to music because we have over 40 kids who want to do music, so I chose those times as well.

The frequency of visits was elaborated on by another teacher who explained the process in more detail.

> This is the year that I am not formally evaluated, but I still have the principal coming in to see how I am doing, which is good. Nothing is written up this year. Last year was the same, but the year before that I had formal evaluation and we had to schedule different meeting times that

> she would come in. She had to come in three times, I think it was. When she did come in, she came in for informal evaluations and then for formal evaluations. We always had a time when we could talk about the lesson beforehand and then she would come in and observe and then we would talk about it afterwards. I found that helpful too because I'd known what she was looking for.

Another teacher explained that the principal had made appointments with her. "She would say, 'When do you want me to come in?' and then we'd set a time that was agreeable for both of us." The teacher went on to describe a situation where she had identified a problem about which she wanted some advice.

> She comes into the classroom and what she does is help us. We go to her and have a conference with her and she asks us where we need help and what do we feel we need help in. At the time I had two boys that were quite a discipline problem and both of them were actually high achievers. She came in and she just followed them for 10 minutes and said exactly who they played with, where they went, and then made a pattern up for me as to what was going on. We worked with that to try to establish some discipline policies and some behavioral control. That was basically how she handled it for me.

When teachers spoke about these visits they always described a focus for them, most often one they had chosen themselves. One teacher had begun a new initiative in her math program, "and so that's where I wanted my observation done. I was clear about what I wanted and that's what I got. I talked to her about what we would want her to look at." Another teacher was asked whether she had a problem that she would like help with. She and the principal worked on the problem and from the teacher's perspective, "It definitely showed she was interested."

For a colleague, it was the way Pat got involved in the classroom experience that made the evaluation more comfortable.

> Pat came in quite a few times. She gets involved with the students, so you don't feel like somebody is sitting there staring you down, writing down everything you say, whatever motion you make or how many times you clear your throat, or you adjust your glasses like somebody who comes in for half an hour and looks. She comes in and gets involved with the students but she is still very much aware of what's going on and she will also come and talk to me in between things and ask "Why are the students doing this?" or "What are you going to do? What's this lesson leading into?" so that she becomes involved and you can explain yourself. Now in the other evaluation you can never explain yourself. It's just this cold, fact thing and I don't think it's fair. I like what we have now.

Pat's tendency to be part of the classroom and focus on the children was remarked on by other teachers.

> I find that more often she comes in, instead of sitting and watching, she interacts with the kids and she will do something. She won't do this evil eye thing and I think that tends to put me at ease, knowing that she will probably see more when she is working with the kids and watching what they are doing and walking around.

Being a frequent visitor to classrooms and spending time observing the children meant that Pat was better able to recognize and understand difficult children's behavior. This knowledge reassured one teacher who felt that only a frequent visitor would have been able to appropriately evaluate a child in her classroom.

> You know your kids. If a student is doing something for a reason, if there is a certain behavior and there is a reason that they do it and you know the kid. Then someone who comes in and has observed them a lot, and interacts with them will have a better idea of why you are doing this with this one child as opposed to constantly picking on him.

The teacher went on to explain that she had a child with a lot of behavior problems and she was reassured that "because I've had so much interaction with Pat she knew that that was a really good day for him not to be up and running laps around the classroom and I think that's a difference too if you know the kids, you know where they are coming from and you know that that's great for him to be able to do that.

One teacher commented on the impact on the students. Unlike the superintendent's infrequent visits where the students "don't see him around school enough to know that he really cares," children did not think about Pat as a visitor. They knew she was interested in them and their work, and her rapport with them was enhanced by activities such as reading stories to the whole school every morning. As a result, teachers said they were more comfortable with having her in their classrooms. This meant that during evaluations, as one teacher explained, "I don't think students even notice that it goes on. I know they don't have any idea what it is. They are used to Pat coming into the classroom. They are used to any adult walking in, and it doesn't disrupt what we do in any way."

A teacher described how initially she had thought about planning a special class for her formal evaluation, but in the end, "I went with my regular plans. Before, if you knew someone was coming in, you wanted something spectacular. Knowing that someone is going to see me over an extended period, I teach more realistically and I just carry on with what I regularly do."

Some teachers remarked that they found the formal and informal classroom observations much less threatening because they were embedded in a more frequent pattern of brief daily visits. One teacher acknowledged that the observer's behavior was a major factor in determining her level of comfort: "It's kind of intimidating to see somebody come in looking and writing, but if the person comes in just observing and leaves and then comes back and talks, that's different." This teacher spoke of enjoying the informal follow-ups that often took place in the staff room or the hall: "I don't think about it as an evaluation. I just think of it as talking to another teacher and comparing styles."

Evaluation Outcomes

Because many of the teachers described situations where the classroom observation had a specific purpose, they were able to provide specific examples of the impact of the evaluation data. The fact that they could zero in on a specific problem that was of importance to them was considered to be very helpful. One teacher explained:

> Last year I was totally frustrated with those two boys. I just didn't know what to do with them, so it was really helpful to know that one learned more on his own, and the other was of a more social type so you could form a pattern. That helped me a lot at the time. Also we discussed different ways, different methods, for helping to improve the way they were in class. One was signs of noisiness and Pat went through a procedure of warnings and consequences so that they knew exactly what the standards were before certain things happened, and that helped me settle down the boys.

One teacher who had asked for particular information about some students' learning styles, was given a recording of the students working together that Pat had made while she was in the class.

> then I was able to sit down and listen to the recording and work on some of the things that I heard in the recording, so that was good. There were some things I could deal with from that, and I think it helped me to see them more clearly.

Another teacher described being worried that a student who sat at the back of the room seemed unable to follow instructions. She asked Pat to monitor whether her voice carried sufficiently to be heard clearly. On other occasions she had asked to be told of anything that would help her improve her teaching because

> I am alone in my classroom all day, and you do things and you don't realize that some of the things you are doing are not helpful and could be changed easily and be more helpful as far as students are concerned.

She told of a colleague who had asked to have her class videotaped and had found this helpful in pinpointing things that no one had told her.

The teacher who had asked for observations related to a new program explained why she thought that the process was useful:

> It put my mind at rest because I was doing something different that until you settle into it, you don't know if it's working or not. She actually went to the children to observe them to see what their understanding of what I had presented was, so that really helped.

She went on to explain that she had followed up with some of the ideas discussed during her evaluation: "I have gone back even after my evaluation and asked for input from the principal, and she has been fine with that, so I guess I have continued in that because the area I was concerned with was trying a new program."

A veteran teacher who had had many previous evaluations noted: "Our present principal has done more to help me strengthen some of the areas I perceive as weaknesses that I didn't really strengthen before, so I appreciate that very much." Another teacher acknowledged that as a result of the evaluation she had had a closer look at herself. "The information the principal gave me last year, I probably used it this year in behavior control, and I have used it in small ways since, so that helped just in giving me useful tips to use in the classroom on a daily basis."

Although the teachers related a number of examples of how observational data and subsequent discussions with Ms. Salter had influenced their teaching, a number also described the purpose of evaluation in broader terms. One experienced teacher explained that "the purpose of evaluation is to help me more than it is to say you are a good teacher or whether you make the grade in the old way," and another added, "I think the whole purpose should be to make your teaching better for the kids." This teacher went on to point out that teaching and learning were so interrelated that "I don't think your teaching can be separated from what's happening within your whole classroom." It was for this reason that she appreciated the principal's frequent visits to her classroom. The importance of the whole classroom was raised by another teacher. She noted:

> The most important thing is to be able to do the evaluation in the most natural setting, to make it natural. When it is over a period of time, when it's more visits and when the person who is evaluating you gets involved in what's happening—that makes a difference. I think you get a much better idea of what is going on with the whole classroom environment. It's supposed to be a helpful thing, and if you don't look at it that way it never will be.

The Context of Evaluation

For many of the reasons given previously, many of the teachers expressed positive opinions about evaluation:

> I think it was very positive. It wasn't as scary as I thought it was going to be and I think I grew as a teacher. I gained. I know it helped me.
>
> A positive experience. The person evaluating you can put you at your ease. If they don't go in to intimidate and you know that, then if you have a bad day they have seen you

> in other situations. They have seen other times in your classroom, so that makes a difference.

These teachers focused on the importance of the continuing relationship with the principal that involved not only social contact but often observation and participation in daily classroom activities. Two teachers on staff were less comfortable than others with this relationship. One, a veteran teacher, who had not been evaluated by Ms. Salter brought forward his misgivings about the process. He recognized that "we do get teachers who should not be teaching, and somehow they have to be convinced of that, and it is not a pleasant task, not an easy task." Although he had not been evaluated for over five years, this teacher reported hearing from other teachers who did not feel that they had been fairly evaluated. "I wish that somehow the evaluation itself could be structured in such a way that it was less political. There is an element of the principal liking you or not liking you and liking what you are doing or not liking what you are doing." He went on to explain what was happening in his own situation, which he was sure could become an issue in an evaluation.

Ms. Salter had requested that all teachers write regular newsletters home to parents.

> Most of the teachers are doing this. Our principal has asked all of us to do it and I usually get one or two a year done, but I don't get around to doing these every month and I really don't agree with it. It doesn't fit into my way of doing things very well, and so far that has not given me any problems. But if I was a beginning teacher, I know that I had better get those newsletters done and get them out to parents every month or I would have no reason to expect a decent evaluation.

The other teacher had experienced a situation that for him was a clear indication of breach of his trust. As a result he was unwilling to discuss any issues with the principal.

He explained Ms. Salter's policy as one where "she trusts us, I suppose. She would assume that we know what we are doing and leave it at that and if there is a problem, come and see me." In his first year with the jurisdiction, the teacher continued, "I was more the kind of person that needs to whine a little bit more and needs to be told when I am doing a good job and needs a pat on the back." He found it difficult to develop independence because "it's more embarrassing to ask for help than it is for someone to come in and ask if you want it. All I have to do is to walk down to her office and say 'Pat, I need help' but in the first year, to me that was to walk into someone's office and say I was not good or competent or something. That's just the way I was brought up."

He had spoken to Ms. Salter on one occasion about his planning, "and I kind of opened up and said these are my weaknesses." On his first-year evaluation, planning was identified as his weakest skill "and to me I thought it was overemphasized." He was also upset that a weakness he had discussed with his principal had appeared in his evaluation. "I didn't have the guts to go up to her and say I feel bad about this. You lose trust once and it's pretty hard to get it back." This teacher expected that the principal would "just look at your planning and judge that in itself, judge the product. The formative part should be a growth thing so I felt kind of betrayed." On another occasion in his second year, the principal had dropped into his room to deliver some papers during a particularly good classroom activity. He showed her what he was doing and a notation about it had appeared on his final report. "In that case it was a favorable thing," he explained.

His own feelings about what was appropriate in evaluation, his lack of trust in the principal, and the exigencies of living in a small community all combined to limit the teacher's options. Although he said he enjoyed teaching in the school and found the principal to be the "best administrator I have ever seen," the personal dynamics of the situation and his own misgivings limited what he was willing to contribute to school affairs.

Professional Growth in the School

A number of teachers explained that the philosophy of the school, the extensive professional development, and their involvement in decision making were all factors that helped make evaluation a positive experience. Most of the staff had been together for at least three years, and during that time they had made a concerted effort to explore the initiatives of Alberta Education including multi-age grouping, whole language instruction, and program continuity. They had found this process valuable, because they now shared a similar philosophy:

> The staff are on the same wavelength in terms of what we want from the kids and the direction we want the school to go in, and that probably affects our evaluations because we know what Pat is looking for in that we understand the same philosophy. I think that would make a difference. We have done so much professional development together, so much that we started in our school ourselves, that we are all on the same wavelength.

Another way of learning from each other was mentioned by a teacher who explained that the staff meetings are held in a different classroom each time "so we get a chance to see what they look like and see what everyone else is doing, because oftentimes we don't get into each other's rooms."

The teachers stressed learning as the process they had used to develop and sustain their philosophy. The principal was identified as "our resource person" because "she has done more reading and attended more conferences." One teacher described how the principal influenced their ideas.

> If there was something she felt very strongly about, she wouldn't push it on us but she would definitely try to find information and make sure I had it on hand and keep feeding it to me until I couldn't dispute it any more. We have switched from grades to comments on the report card, and whenever she finds a piece on that she makes sure we get it, so that we have it first of all on hand for ourselves and then to explain to the parents.

Another confirmed the collaborative nature of decision making, noting that teachers have "really a lot of input on how everything runs in this school. That's how we operate here because I do feel that I do have a lot of input into everything." They saw benefits in the present system.

> I think you need it, I think that it makes me assess my own teaching as well so I think I would want to keep it. I would want it to stay. But I would hope that I would continue to want to grow for myself even if I wasn't being evaluated.

Discussion

Aspenview is a small school in a small community where there has been little teacher turnover and the teachers and principal have developed a strongly held philosophy about teaching and learning. They have read and studied and argued together with their principal as a resource person, and as a staff they feel that decisions are made collaboratively. This *collaborative orientation* has been brought to teacher evaluation. Although the principal still adhered to clinical supervisory cycles, the visits the teachers talked about were the frequent informal visits to talk to the children, to share in the teaching, and to assist the teachers in gathering data about the students' behavior.

Closely associated with the collaborative nature of evaluation was the *focus on student learning* rather than teaching skills. Teaching skills such as planning were not disregarded, but were considered as means to helping children achieve success in the classroom. Hence discussions about observations tended to focus on children and their involvement in the learning experience rather than on objectives, clarity, or questioning. In their descriptions teachers did not differentiate between content and process.

What happened in their classrooms was closely related to the topics they discussed in the staff room. These informal discussions were often begun by the principal and focused on alternative strategies for teaching. Besides these, the teachers identified a number of *professional development* activities in which they were engaged. They had read and discussed professional literature and had planned together to put ideas they agreed with into practice, to gather data on children's learning, and to reassess these ideas in the light of their practice.

Throughout their discussions, teachers referred to the importance of their relationship with the evaluator. Their *sense of trust* that the principal was "not a visitor" but a colleague who knew the daily situation in the classroom and the children well made teacher evaluation seem more like the principal's daily visits. But they also brought to the relationship their own *commitment to learn* and explore in order to enhance the learning environment for the children in their school.

Pine Ridge Elementary School

Like most of the elementary schools in Chinook School Division, Pine Ridge Elementary School is a modern, well-kept structure. It has a large skylight and many windows that catch the eye of the visitor to the school, but in outline it is a low, single-storey building that, with careful landscaping, blends into the surrounding terrain. The large playground and playing fields stretch behind and to the right of the school, while the parking area is off to the left side. As its name suggests, it faces a wide expanse of meadow bordered by conifers that cover the ridges and valleys in the distance as far as the eye can see.

The school is built in a hollow square, and to the left of the main door is a large gym that can be used by the community. The classrooms are spacious and have plenty of light. Primary colors have been used to brighten the corridors, and the semi-abstract designs help young children identify different areas of the school. One room has been designated for computers and is not only used to help children become proficient in word processing, but is also available for the teacher to run software related to particular subjects. The office-staff room complex is to the left of the main doors. The staff room is a pleasant, sunny room with a view of the surrounding countryside. A square of tables fills the center of the room, while couches and coffee tables define a more informal area beneath the windows. The bookcase to one side of the room holds curriculum guides, material from the teachers' provincial association, and some current affairs and professional magazines. A notice board keeps teachers up to date on meetings and events. The sink and counter area, like everywhere else in the school, is clean and tidy.

The Teacher Evaluation Policy in Practice

Principal Jansen has been the administrator at Pine Ridge School for almost nine years, and most of his professional experience has been in the Chinook School Division. A member of the committee who drafted the original policy, he has taken over the years an number of inservices and courses to develop his supervisory skills. His process for teacher evaluation involves a series of four to six preconference-observation-postconference cycles following which he drafts the final report.

He described the process he uses beginning with the preconference.

> I use a variety of things—statement of objectives, attention to review, task transition, verbal/visual clarity, evidence of comprehension, preparation—and I call it a preobservation sheet and I have the list and we often add other things to it. With a beginning teacher, I go through all of those plus six or seven others throughout the year. With a very experienced staff, quite often, it'll be a matter of them selecting the ones that they specifically want me to look at. I appreciate that particular approach because there are areas of particular growth that they recognize even better than I do. It's more of "How can I help you? What can I do in my position to facilitate improving the learning environment for children in that classroom?" I think we've developed enough trust, and to me it's all a matter of trust in something like this.

During his classroom visits, he uses a form of selective verbatim notetaking, jotting down the time at regular intervals, and "highlighting specific things that we have agreed on at the preconference." Following the classroom observation, he makes notes for the postconference.

> When we have our postconference, we talk about those things all the way from the observations to strategies to what we will do the next time. I follow that up with an interim letter—a written acknowledgment—that says here are the items that we discussed at the preconference and what was said at the postconference. I go over those four or six letters to put together the final report. We read the reports in final draft form and if there are any discrepancies or they think there are surprises we rework those. My promise to staff is "no surprises"; that we have dialogued so many times over all these things that there are no surprises. I don't guarantee no negatives. I make it very up front if I want a change in a teacher behavior and if it doesn't occur after repeatedly saying so, then it may well end up in the report, but they know that—so it's back to the business of trust. I've tried to keep it all above board so that nothing is hidden.

Although he has been principal at the school for some time, Mr. Jansen was aware, and so were his staff, that he had neither been prepared for nor had taught in elementary schools. Their willingness to comment on his own areas of perceived weakness was for him an indicator of their willingness to be open and honest. He readily admitted "I have learned more from my staff than they have ever learned from me. In some ways I am a product of this staff and what they have taught me about teaching elementary kids." However, Mr. Jansen was not ready to retain the status quo. Instead, over his term he had been encouraging staff to diversify their teaching strategies. In this he felt he had been successful.

> Even though the change has been slow, it has been substantial over the last five years from teachers that have taken a very traditional approach to teaching and almost 95% teacher-directed instruction to having them progressively incorporating other methodologies—cooperative learning, a thematic approach, grading across the curriculum.

He was a proponent of slow change, meaning "you model it, you show the advantages, you give people time, they start to latch on to different things, they try it and get excited about it." This he attributed partly to his own personality and capacity to deal with change, but he also acknowledged that it was influenced by the diversity of philosophies of the staff. Rather than trying to force the adoption of a common philosophy, he had sought to provide opportunities for teachers to share what they were doing so that their perspectives formed a continuum rather than a dichotomy.

He spoke about the changes that had arisen from staff meetings. Although the staff of Pine Ridge School were close-knit and interacted "a fair amount," he was aware that for teachers there was always an apprehension about speaking about their own activities in front of others: "They would say 'I don't want to share that. Others will think I am pushing it' and others are saying 'We don't want this thing pushed on us.'" Nonetheless, about three years ago he arranged for a highly experienced teacher to speak at a staff meeting. The teacher spoke about her frustrations and failures as she had tried to pursue her philosophy and concluded by saying that she had far to go to become an expert in the area.

Mr. Jansen considered it a turning point for staff, especially for those who had viewed the teacher as already having achieved the success they were only beginning to explore. "Since then, I've seen noticeable changes with other staff going to her and asking, 'How do you do this?' and visiting her classroom, and this teacher sharing not just the successes but the frustrations, what to watch for, and what not to do. He had been especially pleased that one teacher who had been known among a previous generation of children as a boring person who stood at the front of the room and talked was now identified much more favorably with group activities, presentations, and other instructional options. These slow changes were enough to convince Mr. Jansen that his work was having a positive effect on the learning environments of children.

In Mr. Jansen's perspective there were quite a few opportunities for teachers to attend inservices and conferences. Because of limited funding, the jurisdiction had set up a committee to decide who could attend. Most teachers went on a three-year cycle. There were also local initiatives at the school level, teacher facilitators who were responsible for providing some inservices on behalf of the district, and opportunities provided by regional offices.

Mr. Jansen believed above all in modeling those actions he wanted teachers to emulate. He enjoyed being with the children and took every opportunity to pop into classes, to watch special classroom events, to be on the playground, and to take over classes when teachers needed to attend meetings. Because of his background in the sciences, the science teacher often consulted him. He tried to keep a running tab of the amount of time he spent in classes other than those where he was doing classroom observation and set a goal to increase that amount every year.

Teachers' Experiences of Teacher Evaluation

In this school, nine teachers agreed to be interviewed for the study. One was absent, and so eight interviews were conducted and all agreed that their interviews could be audiotaped. Their teaching experience varied from one to over 20 years. At least five had spent all or most of their career in either this school or in another school in the jurisdiction. Three were male and five were female.

Previous Experiences

Three of the teachers began their conversations with recollections of previous experiences with evaluation. One had been in the jurisdiction for a long time and had been evaluated under the previous system. He had problems with that.

> The last time I was evaluated by the assistant superintendent. He came on the third week in May and came in about the seventh period in the day and he was there for a period. He looked at my day books and looked at what times I had and talked to the students and he went away. About two weeks after, we sat down and went over his report and in some areas I couldn't see how he knew what he was claiming to know. The other teacher at my grade level and I had identical year plans, off the same photocopy machine, because we did team planning. She was evaluated on the same day and yet her plans were rated above average and mine were average. I filled in my comments and sent it in. Later when he came out he refused to change it. He said it was like driving a car; some do it better than others. It's a great improvement since they turned it over to the principals.

The other teacher described being evaluated in a situation many teachers would describe as their worst nightmare come true.

> My first evaluation was done by central office. It was the scariest day of my life. We had cowboy days that day, and so you are dressed up as a cowboy and I was teaching a special education class. The kids are coming in and out. I had eight kids at a time and they were sometimes with me for one period, sometimes two, and there were kids coming and going. I was testing one child, two were at the listening center, two were doing something else, and I had one who kept sticking his head out into the hall to see if it was time to go to the gym. It turned out OK in the end because he didn't write it up, but I just know he thought that I didn't know what I was doing.

This teacher went on to describe situations in her student teaching experiences where when she was working in the classroom, the cooperating teacher "would walk out of the room and shut off the lights and close the door," or where when another person came for a meeting and the student teacher, although present, was not introduced. These experiences had left her apprehensive about evaluation, but she had been much reassured by her experiences at Pine Ridge.

The First Meeting/Preconferences

When they began to talk about their experiences in Pine Ridge School, the teachers all started with their first formal meeting with Mr. Jansen. One explained, "We were all aware of it at the beginning of September. He told us when he was coming in and what objectives, the four or five specific things he was looking for." Another teacher described the process in more detail:

> David gave us a preevaluation sheet where we put down our objectives for the lesson, what it will be, and how we are going to evaluate. When we submit the form, then he talks about coming in. On that piece of paper you are supposed to indicate the three objectives he will be looking for. There are several things that are supposed to be looked at, and you can choose which three he is supposed to look at in that visitation. He does three each of the four times.

This format was repeated by other teachers. One emphasized the care taken to establish continuity:

> Principal Jansen came in for four visits and he told me what he was looking for and what he would be especially looking for at that time. If I was doing language, he'd come in today and then he'd come back tomorrow to see how I continued from one day to the next. Over a period of weeks he comes in for these four visits and he also drops in for informal visits, just for a few minutes. I think he knows very well what goes on in this room.

Another spoke about how the principal had tried to allay her nervousness. "Principal Jansen has evaluated me before, but I was so nervous that he had to keep saying "Calm down, calm down."

The teachers appreciated being asked to identify which things the principal would evaluate not only because they were more comfortable with the focus of the evaluation but also because they could then plan a lesson that would provide examples of that skill.

> He gives me a paper which has some things on the top and he circles two or three and says these are the things I'll be looking for especially. I get the form a day or two ahead, and then you have to show him what objectives you have for that lesson and what we're trying to do and what methods we plan on using.

> What I really appreciated was how he laid out what he would be looking for. When I knew that I could think myself about how to organize it so those things were evident, the things he was looking for.

Another teacher acknowledged that it was made clear to her that she was not to structure a lesson to include the identified behavior, but "It's hard not to," she concluded and went on to describe how she had gone through her lesson with other teachers on staff prior to the principal's visit.

Mr. Jansen had already shared plans for the following year with his teachers. He wanted to move from an examination of specified skills on a broad front to a process that would integrate professional growth and evaluation. One teacher related, "He said that at the end of this year he would like everyone even if they are being evaluated three years from now to pick one or two areas to work on; then when we are evaluated again we will see if we have been successful."

Criteria

Although teachers were generally supportive of the process, two raised concerns about the specific criteria used. A teacher in a specialist area described how it was not always possible or appropriate to use criteria established for teacher-centered classrooms, and another explained, "I don't feel we are getting to the nature of the learning experience as such. These are more procedural types of things, possibly because they are more easily observed, they can be quantified in a better fashion."

Classroom Observation

Although the teachers were comfortable with the preconferencing process, their responses to classroom observations held some apprehension. As one explained,

> I try not to worry about it because in the beginning I found the night before you could never get to sleep, and you were just awful in the morning due to lack of sleep and if anything bad was going to happen, it would happen then because you were so uptight, so I tried to put it out of my mind as much as possible. Now I think about what I am going to do and go ahead with it and try to ignore the person that's there.

Although they were comfortable with the principal, they never forgot that he was in the classroom. One called it "a bit of an artificial situation," and another explained, "There is a certain apprehension about it, more beforehand. I am conscious of the principal being there, then I get on with the class but conscious of him being there?—It does take over, it does take over." One teacher described the fine line between judgment and advice:

> There are times when I'm not comfortable with people coming into my room but it's because I'm thinking that they are going to see that I'm doing something wrong, or may be I *am* doing something wrong because of all this uncertainty of which direction people are supposed to be going. I don't take criticism well. I tend to get very defensive, but I will be fine with a suggestion or those kinds of things.

In contrast, another teacher agreed that although she was conscious of the principal's presence she was able to ignore him. "I know he is there but I don't care, I just do my job the way I want to do it." Sometimes, as one teacher explained, the teacher's level of confidence with the subject or grade level made the difference: "He was writing things down and it really made me nervous. I think it was because it was a new grade and I was not really secure." This teacher went on to explain that she had felt much more competent in her previous placement so that "anybody could walk in and I could do anything with the kids," but in her new grade "things like social studies I had not taught before, and it was nerve-racking at first." She felt that her first year at a new grade level was very much a learning experience. "No one goes into a grade and knows what they are doing," she explained, "You cannot find all the materials and be mindful of every single thing. You start from one point and try to go to the next point and you try to find the materials as you can."

Besides making a series of formal visits for the purpose of evaluation, the principal tried to visit classrooms informally. One teacher did not wait for a visit but instead asked Mr. Jansen in because she had a particularly low reading group. "He came in and sat for the whole period listening and reading with the boys, and they really liked that because he was involved with the lesson. They didn't feel that he was there to evaluate me. I'm sure they just thought that he was there to read along with them, and they liked that, and I liked that too."

Postconferences

Teachers' descriptions of their postconferences followed the procedures described by Mr. Jansen. However, what comes most clearly from their descriptions is their pleasure at not being prejudged but at being involved in that judgment themselves after the situation had been discussed and discrepancies cleared.

> He schedules a time for discussion after each visit, and he told me what he had seen. The second time he had written down a schematic diagram of the kinds of conversation and interplay that was happening in the room, which gave me a good picture. The thing I enjoyed the most was he did it on a nonjudgmental basis. He came in and he just said, "This is what I see happening. It's not negative. It's not positive." That was good because sometimes I felt that it was like looking at a picture of yourself and that I found to be useful. He gives good suggestions.
>
> He'll explain what he saw and what the strong points were and he doesn't really say you've done a poor job in an area but he'll sometimes suggest this or that approach

> or he'll ask why you did something. This lets you explain to him what you were trying to do, and sometimes it clears up something he's been wondering about.

While some teachers stressed the avoidance of direct judgment, others found the discussion of what the principal had observed to be the most valuable part of the conference. In reviewing the entire procedure, a teacher concluded, "I found it to be more helpful than any of the other evaluations I have had," and another concluded, "It's mainly positive reinforcement. The principal asks questions about the reasons why you did things and discusses alternatives. In a way that is development as well as evaluation."

The teachers recognized that in making suggestions the principal was providing alternatives they should consider.

> He sits down with you at the end of the school day—he tries to do it as soon as possible—and then sometimes for an hour or more he'll sit and talk to you about what has been happening and the way things are going. He won't say "You have to try this," but he might say, "You know, sometimes in this situation this is what I do," or "I know other people might do this and you might consider it and see if it works for you." The bottom line for me is, did the students gain from it? and sometimes it might be more interesting for me as well.

Where behaviors were identified as needing improvement, the principal worked with the teacher to provide alternatives and advice. One teacher said, "We always worked on strategies together. I never felt that it was up to me to fix it, we worked things out together," and another added, " I think the way it is now is very fair. When David sits down and talks with us, then we know what the written report is going to be. There are no surprises and that's why it's fair too."

Relationship

A number of teachers spoke about the importance of a positive relationship with the principal, and one speculated that if there was some kind of conflict with the principal, there would have to be an alternative procedure. In general, the teachers thought that Mr. Jansen was a fair person and that his frequent visits to their classes and his interest in what was happening in their classes helped contribute to their trust in the process and in his evaluation.

For one teacher it was the sense that the principal was a friend who was "trying to help, not hinder. Otherwise, I wouldn't have the same degree of trust or be relaxed." The teacher went on, however, to explore a sense of professional confidence and spoke more strongly about this aspect:

> I think it comes, too, from confidence in yourself as a teacher. I always feel that I am doing a good job and I know that I have days when I'm not the greatest, everybody does; but you evaluate yourself basically as you go on, and if you feel confident in what you are doing, you aren't afraid when someone comes in to look at what you are doing.

Another teacher also started out discussing Mr. Jansen as a fair and helpful person but differentiated between his personality and his professional competence. This teacher saw him as "becoming more open and his views have become broader," and went on to explain that "I feel now I am a part of this school and not an outsider where you should not have ideas of your own. I believe in being able to say and practice what I think professionally. I don't mind him now, but before I did not know if I should say something or not." Similarly, another teacher talked about the reality of working in a small school and in a small community where one plans to be for the rest of one's teaching career. In such situations the politics of being polite, of not saying what you think, and of some staff being favored are realities that make evaluation as a fair process very difficult.

Impact

Few teachers spoke about the formal report at length. The following comment was typical: "He asked me to read it over and then to sign it 'understanding that you are aware that we talked about these things.'" However, they told differing stories about the impact of the evaluation on their classroom practice. Some identified specific reactions; others discussed the process more generally.

For one teacher, the evaluation gave her added confidence that when she was dealing with students that the principal "understands that I'm capable of dealing with it. Because he has evaluated me, I get the feeling that he's confident in my professionalism." Another teacher was able to obtain ideas from the principal in his area of expertise that were helpful to her teaching.

Those teachers who spoke about the process in general terms did not consider that the process had really influenced their teaching. Instead, although they saw the process as positive in that it provided them with feedback that they were indeed competent, they did not see it as making any lasting mark on their teaching. They appreciated that the principal saw them as already competent and encouraged them to always do better and to be more effective. As one teacher explained, "He said to think of it more like professional development. It's sort of a nice way to go about doing it, because I think all of us know we're satisfactory and capable of teaching, but it is also nice to have someone come in and take a look at what we're doing and give us ideas." At the same time, another veteran teacher felt that this positive rapport was insufficient:

> It was a good experience but I don't feel it is worthwhile. It keeps me on my toes, but I feel that I am doing the best I

> can with my teaching and I question whether the time might be better spent with beginning teachers.

One teacher labeled evaluation "a necessary evil" but was adamant that anyone who felt that her teaching was inadequate had better be able to show an alternative. She insisted, "How can an evaluator who doesn't know what the subject matter is do it? I agree that there is a common thread of good teaching for every subject, but if you are talking about a particular content, then the person who doesn't have the expertise cannot see the fine points within the lesson that an expert notices." Although she was quite outspoken in suggesting that evaluation had had no impact on her teaching, other teachers also described how they evaluated and sometimes discarded proposed alternatives that they did not think fitted their teaching style or their particular philosophy.

One teacher was concerned that the evaluation process itself was particularly difficult for beginning teachers.

> I look at first-year people and I know that we need to evaluate them, but I also feel sometimes that they are just basically feeling their way around in the dark and if the situation is not dreadful with no teaching going on or terrible discipline, maybe we need to give that person room to grow. They are going to discover sooner or later what they want from the students. I've seen first-year people, people who had good potential to become teachers, and they have been written off or got the feeling they weren't competent as teachers, and yet given time they would probably be every bit as competent as the next person. That's the unfair part; to expect someone to know what a person who has many years of experience knows and to act in the way that person who has experience acts.

The beginning teachers at this school spoke positively about the support of the principal, but also describing their nervousness and apprehension during the experience. An experienced teacher had few concerns about the principal visiting her classroom but added, "I love to teach, but I seriously question whether evaluation helps you to grow."

Teacher Growth

Teachers who spoke of their own professional growth spoke about doing professional reading, about setting goals for themselves in their teaching, about planning topics and evaluating how well they had worked, about discussing their teaching with others, and about asking colleagues for advice.

One teacher described how when she began her teaching she did not feel that she knew as much about the curricular areas as she wished.

> I taught grade two and I can remember dreaming at night about the children and I thought that it wasn't enough that I have to be there all day but I have to dream about them! That led me to take more courses about learning disabilities and reading difficulties. That increased my confidence and changed my teaching more than the evaluation. It was just the knowledge building and the opportunity to explore those areas.

Another teacher spoke about how "I set goals for myself. I have my own agenda and it is that I want my kids to be able to perform better or at least up to a certain level."

A number of teachers described talking with others about their teaching. One described how, in her previous school, the large number of first-year teachers had looked to her for advice; now in her present school,

> I'm really fortunate to have highly experienced people on staff and I feel I can say to one, "Do you think this is the right time to do this? Shouldn't this kid know this by now?" Someone to bounce things off. I can look to other people and I like that. If you didn't do that, you could go on for a long time not really growing. This is a conservative community. It's comfortable, but it sometimes lacks a little growth and innovation.

Another veteran teacher described a similar process:

> I learn more from other staff members and especially with all these changes coming out of the Department. Just asking "Well, what do you do?" and "How does that work?" One of our teachers is more up on the language arts than I am, so I ask her quite often about how to approach things. I tell her the problem and she'll tell me how she goes about it, and that's probably where I learn more than from evaluation. The evaluation helps, but I think I learn more from the people I work with than I do from the evaluations.

Although other teacher mentioned how "getting together with the other teachers in my grade level and discussing things is very beneficial," at least one teacher was hesitant to go beyond discussion to observation.

> Principal Jansen has suggested visiting other teachers, but he doesn't say you have to do it. I've never really asked another teacher if I could go visit their class, but probably the one way that I learn best is to watch. I can improve if I can actually see somebody do something. We talk a lot. There is a level of comfort. We ask each other questions and even sort of say, "I have a problem here, what do you think I should do?" but the next stage of actually walking into their classroom and sitting at the back and watching them teach is a whole other level of trust that makes that much harder to do unless you have almost a personal relationship with someone or you are teaching them.

One teacher spoke about the principal, the students, and the parents as resources for her growth: "It comes from a combination of things, but I do have a principal that I can talk to about anything, any time, anywhere. If I need him to help, he will. And the students, they keep you going. They want to know. And parents are good."

Being in a rural community the teachers described themselves as having few opportunities to attend inservices. Each teacher was asked about the professional development opportunities available, and a typical response was,

> Living here, you get the opportunity to go to conferences only once every two years There is one PD day at the beginning of the year and we try to choose topics which are current. And in the school we do have small committee groups to look at something for staff and tell the staff what's happening.

However, one of the last teachers interviewed said, "We have lots of inservices—three or four plus our professional development day. Well, maybe that's not lots but it's enough to help you." The teacher went on to describe inservices in math, language arts, and integration and said that another one was forthcoming. Asked if other teachers from the school had attended, she named colleagues. On reflection, these workshops focused mainly on curriculum or on provincial initiatives. Perhaps these teachers did not view these mandated topics as important in enhancing their teaching. At the same time, teachers did mention their concerns about changing curricular initiatives. One described how staff meetings had been given over to discussions about

> the new program of studies in the language arts and to make sure that we are still in tune with what we are supposed to be doing. There are still individual differences among the teachers as to how they are going to approach it, but we do get together at staff meetings and try to come up with an overall general approach so we are all in tune with each other in school, and that's a bit difficult as well to always work out.

Discussion

Pine Ridge School is in a small community and the majority of the staff and the principal are long-time residents. They have differing views of teaching, and Mr. Jansen has taken a long view on trying to bring the teachers to some common agreement about a school philosophy. He has put into place a labor-intensive model of clinical supervision and has put much effort into gathering detailed information, which is shared as soon as possible with the teacher involved. He is most concerned with encouraging his staff to explore alternatives and has chosen to do so through providing options in his postconference discussions. Three themes are evident in the descriptions of evaluation at Pine Ridge School.

First there is *a sense of trust and respect* that the staff feel for Mr. Jansen. Because they know that he has the interests of the students at heart and goes to great lengths to be fair and alleviate any anxiety on their part, they accord him respect for his initiatives in evaluation. He has assured them that there will be no surprises and this has been the case. For those who were evaluated under the old system this is a definite improvement. At the same time, there is a sense that teachers retain *considerable autonomy* about the way they conduct their classroom affairs. Although Mr. Jansen makes suggestions, the teachers variously attempt to put them into practice, especially when it is in the area in which Mr. Jansen previously taught, or discard them as inappropriate. This is a point of some frustration for the principal who attempts to model the particular practice when he can. His willingness to take over classes when teachers have to meet specialists or parents means that he has many opportunities to discover what is happening in classrooms between his formal visits.

Although they maintain that teacher evaluation did not impact their practice much, teachers did undertake a number of activities related to *professional growth.* One at least, the staff room discussions, was initiated by Mr. Jansen while other inservice opportunities were not remembered as contributing to the enhancement of teaching.

Mountain Spruce School

Mountain Spruce School, a grades 4-12 school, is situated in a small rural town. It is also the junior-senior high school for the surrounding community and has been added to over the years as the population of the town and community expanded. The school gymnasium is in some ways the community center for sports and is a modern facility attached to one end of the school. At the other end is the elementary wing, and in between are the classrooms for the secondary students. The main office is just off the front hall. The staff room contains a large table and some easy chairs, besides the usual fridge, sink, and coffee pot. It has a magazine rack in one corner and a closet for coats and boots. There is not much room to move around, suggesting that when all the staff congregate it must be quite congested. Bulletin boards are covered with notices of events both in school and in the local community. The spacious classrooms are built on a hollow square plan, which means that most have natural light. Hallways have showcases of students' work on display.

Today it has a population of approximately 500 students and a staff of 25 teachers, most of whom are not long-time residents of the community. Teacher turnover has been a problem in previous years and in recent years the principal has had between 11 and 16 teachers to evaluate each year. With the downturn in the economy and the lack of teaching placements, the school administration expects that most newcomers to the school will stay for three to five years before moving to another location outside the jurisdiction.

School Evaluation in Practice

In discussing the characteristics of the school population, the school administrative team pointed out that not only teachers but a sizeable proportion of their students are also not long-time residents. Some are students whose parents have moved into town to follow the job market and may well move again before the end of the year. Others are First Nations students who have to board in town during the week. Many of these students find the life in town too different and return to their reserves. Still others are students who drop out of school and have little incentive from their families to return. In this school, the administrative team have to balance their time between a focus on students at risk and one on teacher evaluation. The principal, Ms. Ahlstrom, explained that over the last three years teacher turnover had been high.

> The first year there were 16 new teachers. In the second year, there was slightly less turnover, but all of those 16 had to be evaluated again in the second year for their permanent certification. Then going into the third year, there was another number of new teachers. It is decreasing, but every group of new teachers is a new commitment for their first and second year.

She went on to explain that "last year our assistant superintendent had the expectation that all teachers new to schools should be visited four times in the first month. I didn't meet that in all cases," she confessed. Ms. Alstrom shared teacher evaluation with her assistant principal, Mike Raleigh. Initially they had divided the group equally, but the introduction of a new program to try to increase attendance and parental concerns with a reading series had consumed so much of his time that only those teachers who were specialists and did not teach a class, for example, the guidance counselor, remained on his list. He explained that he met with each teacher at the beginning of the year and discussed goals and strategies. He kept notes on meetings he had attended with them and met with them regularly to discuss their progress. Although this process worked well, he was concerned that it would not be possible in the following year when the teacher who taught French was to be evaluated. Mr. Raleigh noted that

> under the board's policy, the teaching process is broken down into a set of teaching skills, classroom management skills, areas where you can do an evaluation on some of that, but you can't really focus on the teaching without some experience or knowledge of the language. You can probably say that's a good technique, nice feedback, it seems that everything is going OK, but the actual instruction, use of language, you will be unable to do due to your lack of knowledge.

The previous year he had evaluated five teachers, some of whom he had visited six or seven times because "some of them were interested in where they were going and what they were doing and we just got going, and just didn't seem to stop." This year he visited about five classrooms informally every week. Sometimes he planned to take a period and visit; at other times, he acknowledged, visiting classrooms was preferable to the task at hand, and sometimes when he was in the hall, he was drawn into classrooms in response to the sounds he heard. Not as many teachers as he wished taught with their doors open, and some locked their doors.

> When I have to take my keys out and jingle them around and unlock a classroom door, it stops whatever instruction is there; everything halts, and the teacher comes over to ask if there is something I'm looking for, and when I say "No, I just popped in," it is not really true because I interrupted, I broke in.

Ms. Alstrom described the particular teacher evaluation procedures she had adopted.

> I sit down with all the teachers at the beginning of the year, tell them what my style of evaluating is, the instruments that I use—and I give them copies and then ask them to tell me which class they would like me to come into and the date. If I am to come in the morning I ask that it's a day when they have a prep in the afternoon so that we can do postconference that day, or if it's in the afternoon, we do it either after school or early in the morning of the next day. So I go to class and do my observation. I come back and try to do my analysis immediately then I meet with them for the postconference. I always make a recommendation in my notes and sometimes on specific things. I make out a timetable of my observation and conference appointments in the beginning of the week and as I do them, I highlight them.

She also provided a copy of the sheet she handed out to teachers at the beginning of the cycle. It had one or two questions under each of the following headings: set, objective and purpose, input, modeling, check for understanding, guided practice, independent practice, and closure. Ms. Alstrom went on to explain that she used a form of verbatim transcription and a shorthand notation with which she felt comfortable. "I can write down just about everything that happens, and in 40 minutes I generally get about six to eight pages of notes." She went on to explain that if charting movement or questioning was useful, then she would suggest that it be used on her next visit. In all she made four visits to each teacher, and these were to be in addition to the four visits in the first month. She found that this hectic schedule left her little time to visit tenured teachers.

Professional development at the school level was something she had not been able to plan. Staff meetings involved all staff, and she found that even when the staff divided into elementary and secondary groups to deal with specific items, there was little time to complete even the day-to-day items. The opportunity to provide more professional development activities at staff meetings was for her "still a dream." She liked to send as many staff as she could to inservices, but "it always depends on how many subs I can get." At the same time, she went on to describe how she had met with her elementary teachers to discuss the changes in language learning "informally in small groups at lunch or after school." These meetings she saw as being focused on curriculum rather than professional development.

The vice-principal had related concerns. Although the jurisdiction provided a number of inservice activities, he explained that these tended to focus on changes in curriculum and that "it's not inservice that's going to make you a better teacher. It's inservice that hopefully will get you to use this technique or style or approach to do something, so it's not professional development in that sense, it's information." In his view, a desire for involvement in professional development reflected a desire on the part of teachers "to know more about what they are doing in a specific subject area." He saw this as tied to the length of their teaching experience in that, "Our new teachers are learning every day and they will for a couple of years. Some of them will say that the evaluation process has helped them to identify specific areas to work on and helped give them the means to do it." However, he thought that veteran teachers would be less likely to link evaluation and professional development and noted that, in general, teachers in the jurisdiction were dissatisfied with professional development opportunities, a view that he thought was likely to be similar for much of the province: "You get $500 to go to the convention, and when you come back you are supposed to be a better teacher, but you're not."

Both administrators expressed regret that the number of evaluations required each year precluded their involvement with veteran teachers except when they had to respond to a complaint. It was hard to require changes of a new teacher when the newcomer pointed to veteran teachers on staff who did not seem to exhibit the behavior. This also affected the culture of the school and did little to forge relationships among teachers in general.

Teachers' Views of Evaluation

In all 14 teachers agreed to be interviewed and to have the interviews audiotaped. Seven were male and seven female. Some were neophytes, whereas others were veteran teachers with over 15 years of teaching experience, much of it in the jurisdiction. Of the 14, two thirds had four or fewer years of experience. All had been evaluated in the last three years. Their descriptions follow the general sequence of the evaluation experience but also include reference to professional development.

The Teacher Evaluation Policy

Most teachers had only a vague recollection of a teacher evaluation policy. All, especially teachers in their first or second year, were aware that they were to be evaluated, but some talked about each classroom visit as an evaluation and most had not thought to have any input into the process beyond choosing the classes to be observed.

> I've been evaluated, so I know they have to do them, but I don't know much about how many times they have to or anything like that. I thought it was eight times or something like that, but I'm not quite sure. The principal gave me a policy on what they look for in observations, but I don't remember what was on it now.

Two teachers had identified some things they wanted the evaluator to look for and one teacher had insisted that since it was his year for evaluation, he wanted one completed in the fall term. However, as one more experienced teacher commented, "I'm aware there is a policy where the teacher must be evaluated four times or whatever in the first and second year and then every three years after that, but that's as far as it goes," and another confessed, "First couple of years, I had it memorized—how many times I had to be seen. I can't remember. I never worry about that any more."

Teacher Evaluation in Practice

Although they were not knowledgable about the jurisdiction's policy, the teachers were comfortable explaining the procedures in place at Mountain Spruce School. One teacher explained the process with reference to an earlier evaluation by a previous principal during the course of her time in the school.

> The previous one when I was a first-year teacher I wasn't really comfortable with since the principal never explained anything of what he was looking for, and when it was written up I didn't think it meant anything. He wasn't an outgoing person and didn't seem like he really cared about his teachers, and because of that it was really awkward. Nothing was stated. My last evaluation was much better. The principal took the time to explain what she was looking for and everything, and had a preevaluation and postevaluation meeting and it was a lot more helpful.

This principal was Ms. Ahlstrom and the evaluation process she used was described in similar terms by a number of teachers.

> You have a preconference where you discuss expectations. You have your evaluation. The principal enters your classroom, spends the period there, and usually the administrator does that three times, then you have a postconference to discuss how that evaluation or how the class went. Then afterwards you get a written document of your class, abilities, or just a general analysis of classroom performance. From there, if there are recommenda-

> tions you can discuss these recommendations, and then decide if you want to implement it.

This combination of preconference, observation and postconference was repeated by other teachers who described these aspects in more detail.

The Preconference

The process usually began with the principal putting a memo in the teacher's mailbox with a list of the criteria that she would be looking at and a request for an appointment. As one teacher explained,

> The principal left a message in my box. She would like to have a preconference with me. So basically she took me to her office and took 20 minutes or so to explain what she was looking for, the purpose of the evaluation, expectations, when she would be in, and if that time was appropriate, and gave me a good week's notice. After that she came in and observed my class. She sat throughout the entire class making notes, sitting in the back. She wrote down everything I said and everything the students said, so it was a verbatim transcript. She made recommendations and then had a postconference to explain my evaluation and areas where I was strong and where I was weak and recommendations for different things to look at as far as the classroom goes. I found those to be quite useful. She only had one recommendation to make, and I adjusted myself according to that, and then the next time, two or three months later, did the same process, and then the third time; and the third time there were no recommendations made.

A second teacher described the preconference as a session where the principal tried to uncover "what you really wanted to achieve in the class. Although a good lesson plan will always indicate what the objective is, there are really some hidden expectations that teachers have or things they want to try for—management styles and things that don't come across in the lesson plan." For this teacher, these were also a focus of the preconference.

Another teacher described the preconference in more affective terms:

> It was just the idea of getting comfortable with somebody coming in and the principal was really friendly and easygoing saying, "Don't be nervous. I'm just here to take a look at what's going on." She wasn't going to be looking at anything specific. She was looking for how the class was run and then she'd come up with suggestions which I could work on for next time.

Sometimes, despite these initial plans, the administrators were unable to complete the full cycle of evaluations. Two experienced teachers were upset by this change in plans. One insisted that he be evaluated:

> I came down to the point where I really had to ask and demand that my evaluation be done. You don't like having to do it because it's like, "Excuse me, I need this. I'm supposed to be evaluated." "Don't worry. If there is anything wrong, we'll let you know." Which doesn't help you develop. They seem to think that I could stay in neutral and as long as nothing bad happens, then I won't have any problems.

The other teacher finished with one observation at the end of the year. She rejected her positive evaluation because of what it did not include. It stated

> you have good planning skills, you have good rapport with children—all those things that I know I have, but I wanted to know what my weaknesses were. It was my first year back teaching at this level. I can't even remember if I kept the copy because I didn't find it to be a worthwhile experience.

Once the classes and times for the observation were agreed on, the administrator visited the classroom to observe.

Classroom Observation

In discussing their observations some teachers emphasized how they had prepared for this event and their feelings when it happened, whereas others stressed the focus of the evaluator's notetaking.

The teacher's planning was usually to develop a tight sequence of events and stick to it.

> I prepared more than usual and didn't digress. I tried to stick to the formal lesson plan, because you have to give them a copy of the lesson plan before you start, so they are looking and trying to find out how much you adhere to your plan and how you are going to structure your lesson, so a lot of that digression won't happen.
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> It's not that you are a different person when the evaluator comes in or it's not that you have different things happening. It's just that you have them in a set sequence and you have every activity planned to a tee. You have all directions all laid out, and you have your lesson plans—boy, are they shipshape!

Sometimes this involved teachers changing their style somewhat. "I had more hands going up and just whatever I thought she'd be looking for. I thought through what I'd be doing more than I usually do. I had more materials and things." One teacher who taught a specific subject noted:

> when you are going to get evaluated in period three, during this class, you set it up and you think about it and you plan for it specially, because whatever you had planned originally you may not use because sometimes I'm working one-on-one with the students. That's not the kind of thing that gives you a good evaluation; they don't want that, so you plan a different lesson. They want me to do lecturing type teaching.

This teacher went on to reflect that she had never been told this, but that in her lab courses she had been asked whether she would be doing some actual teaching and mused, "maybe they don't consider one-on-one teaching—even though I know it is, but it is still hard for them to evaluate because they can't really hear you."

A number of the teachers described their feelings at being observed. Most often the initial feeling of discomfort did not last, but the consciousness about being observed did not leave.

> As you teach you tend to lose that discomfort, and you have to teach the course no matter what, so you start to just not acknowledge the person as being part of the class. The only time I really notice is, for instance, within a classroom you handle discipline your own particular way. If you know that the person evaluating you may not be the same kind of disciplinarian, you are more conscious of the way you would do it, not necessarily that you think your method is wrong; it's just that that person might disapprove because it's not their method.

Although they were conscious that they had taken specific efforts to shape the lesson, the teachers mentioned that the students were also aware of the situation and behaved differently.

> The first one was pretty hairy. You basically try to cover every avenue you can. You've probably the best lesson plan you've ever had in your life put together because you are nervous about it and you cover everything. The students are usually intimidated at the beginning with the principal being there so they are very good. The principal doesn't get a really good idea of what's going on in this classroom because the kids don't misbehave.

For one teacher the students helped reduce her anxiety: "Basically it was the kids telling me to calm down a little bit and everything going OK. Just because of it the kids were a lot better and I never had any problems with that class."

Most often teachers described the administrator as coming quietly into the room, sitting at the back, and taking copious notes.

> The principal came into the room very quietly so as not to distract the class. On a couple of occasions I'm not even sure if the children were cognizant of the fact she was there. She sat at the back of the room and took notes, looked around the room, and made very detailed notes about what I was doing, when I did it, for how long I did it, how I would have students quieten down if they were too noisy or just hand signals to them. Two or three pages of notes and some general observations. The main thrust was to focus on what you would find in any methods text at university—objectives, opening, closing, expectations, that stuff.

Other teachers gave similar examples:

> She looked at things like whether or not you were walking around in the class, how far you walked around, if it was just one aisle or all the way around the class. Questioning, who was answering, how many times did that person answer, was there anyone in particular you seemed to be avoiding or any group. Which of the kids seemed to be sitting up at the front and which at the back.

> She listed the concepts that we were covering; she made some comments on the types of question I was asking, about students I called on, about how I addressed the students, about my physical movement around the room.

> He watched me and who I interacted with most and he made a note of each student in the class and how often I interacted with that particular student and which side of the classroom I tended to favor.

One teacher had expected that the principal would address each of the criteria and was more mystified than upset when this did not happen.

> She made notes but they weren't based on the criteria that she said she would be looking for. She wrote things down that you said, or that she thought you did wrong. She was very positive but just not following any sort of set of criteria while she actually did it. The kids were really comfortable with her and she stayed for about half an hour and then she left.

A number of the teachers mentioned the administrators' good rapport with the students which made their presence in classrooms that much easier for the teachers.

Postconference

Each classroom observation was followed by a postconference either the same day if the teacher had a spare or early the following morning. One teacher's reaction was typical.

> In a sense you naturally had a little anxiety, you were curious as to how this would turn out. When we went and sat in the office, I found that they were very congenial, they sat you down, they showed you the notes, told you about all the positive things you did and how great it was. I got lots of feedback and just one suggestion.

Another teacher had been given supplementary materials.

> She said questioning was one of the things, and she gave me a handout to look over. The organization of the classroom in the sense of having materials up on the walls and things like that, being a bit more organized ... She made points you don't really notice because you're focusing on your lesson. You might see them but you don't pay attention.

The postconference also provided teachers with the opportunity to obtain advice. "In a sense the postconference gives you a chance to not only discuss your evaluation but also discuss some other problems that you're having that you wouldn't necessarily go to her about," explained one teacher, and another explained how he had used the opportunity to build on something that had happened in the observation and ask what would happen in another situation, and had received some good advice. One neophyte teacher found it an opportunity to pick up necessary background on specific students.

Besides discussing these aspects of the evaluation process, teachers also described the importance of rapport with the evaluator.

Relationship with Evaluator

A number of teachers mentioned the importance of their relationship with the evaluator. As one teacher described it,

> I was eager for her to see me teach. We interacted in the hallways and on a number of occasions and she obviously had some confidence in me. I wanted to prove that I was a competent teacher. I was eager for her to come in and see me because I'd like to show that I can do my job.

One teacher stressed two aspects of the relationship: "The teacher has to feel comfortable with the person doing the evaluation, and have respect for the person's ability. If you feel that the person doesn't know what they are talking about, how can you be evaluated by that person?" The principal's rapport with staff and with students was seen as an asset, especially by the neophytes who felt that being comfortable with the evaluator reduced their anxiety. One teacher sought information about the process from more experienced colleagues who reassured him that they had had positive experiences and he would too, a point of some regret for a veteran teacher who was still coming to terms with a previous evaluation: "If I had had my present principal do my first evaluation, I'd feel more comfortable with it—probably I'd have a whole different attitude. I'm still leery of evaluations, but I'm getting used to them."

Although they were comfortable with their principal, some of the teachers worried about what might happen if the teacher and principal did not get on. One teacher described a previous evaluation experience where she felt the principal had been too busy to listen to her problems and the incident had ended up on her evaluation. In her first year as a teacher she had 36 students and not enough desks, so students sat on the counters at the side and back of the room.

> The ones that learned or wanted to moved to the front and the ones that didn't want to learn and fooled around were at the back of the class. You really felt like you were only teaching half the class and there was nothing you could do with these other ones.

She felt that her principal had not been receptive to her concerns and instead had noted on her evaluation that she didn't have control.

Learning from the Evaluation Experience

In describing what they had learned from their evaluation experiences, teachers responded in three main ways: some spoke of the inadequacy of the process for their learning; others described the skills and techniques that they had added to their repertoire; and the largest number spoke about the lack of constructive criticism.

Some teachers described their evaluation experience as eventful and exciting. They had planned carefully and had enjoyed having the evaluator in the classroom, but when they were asked how much they had learned from the experience, their response was "Not much." One teacher went on to explain why the process had fallen short.

> I'm not entirely convinced that this is because I don't have anything to improve, I think it is in the nature of these evaluations. I don't find it a learning situation and there are a number of reasons for that. First, it's an artificial situation—I'm told they are coming in here and I'll be perfectly up front with you, the way I taught or the lesson I had while I was being evaluated, you will not walk into the classroom eight times a day, five days a week, and see this type of environment. There's just no way, and even the kids know. Any evaluator will tell you that if the kids are behaving themselves in a class while they are there, that's a sign that the kids worry about what's going to happen to the teacher and they look on that as a positive thing. The second thing is that they are not going to give you a bad evaluation unless you absolutely blow it. The third thing is I think the whole evaluation procedure involves the wrong people. I think the principal should be part of it and the superintendent, but the kids are the ones they have to ask. They are the ones I get the benefit from when I ask them to write me letters and tell me how I'm doing. They are the ones who teach me how to teach.

For this teacher, the process itself was flawed because evaluators did not ask students to be involved.

Other teachers found the technical language used to describe their teaching useful. They appreciated learning more about the techniques of their own practice. One teacher who had a difficult class to discipline was apprehensive about being observed. He described what he had learned in the postconference.

> The evaluator said I favor the right side, so the kids that wanted to avoid talking or discussing would sit on the left hand side and that's true. I tended to ignore them, and he may have been right and that was useful. It made me think about whether I was ignoring them or whether they were behaving themselves and they were a serious behavior problem very often, so that was kind of useful to make me think about it in another way. So now I watch to see where kids sit and I think about it more. He suggested some techniques to draw them in more that I tried, and some of them worked and some didn't.

Another noted, "I became more aware of some things like walking around," and a colleague added that while he was now more aware of posing appropriate questions, this was not something that could be easily added to one's repertoire.

> Posing appropriate questions is something that is a skill. I think you can learn so much of it but I think so much of it has to be within you. If you don't know how to change the question to give the student a different slant, you're going to have a hard time.

The need to vary their teaching strategies and use a greater variety of materials posed problems for at least one teacher who appreciated the advice but found it difficult to follow:

> Some of it is good stuff, but some of it is very hard to do because there are fewer materials. If you were in the city you could find things to add to your classroom. Here you have to make it, and if you can't visualize and it's hard to get the materials, it won't happen.

Not all teachers acted on the suggestions they received. As one explained, "The suggestion was to display quality work of exceptional students, but I don't believe in that, so therefore if you look around you won't see it." Another added, "I may have changed it for a week or so perhaps but they were such minor suggestions."

Although some teachers received suggestions they chose not to follow, more frequently teachers complained that such suggestions were lacking. Although they valued the advice they obtained during the postconferences, the recommendations for improvement were often too few for these teachers. They acknowledged that they had developed set lesson plans and had tried to teach the perfect lesson, but they still wished for more information about their teaching. One first-year teacher said, "I can't be perfect; there has to be something." Another added, "Everything is so glowing. I say to myself I'm a new teacher; I can't believe I can be that good. There's got to be something I'm doing wrong." Others had similar concerns:

> It gave me more confidence, but it would have been nicer to have constructive criticism, like something to work on because she never told me anything that I should be working on, so I'm still kind of up in the air. I don't know if I'm doing this right.

> I feel that evaluations are just a darn good pat on the back but not really anything constructive.

> I think that probably the thing that would help me the most would be to identify something to work on. I know I make mistakes, but I don't always know I am making them, and other people can be much more objective about the situation than you can yourself (but not a thousand negatives!).

Although the principal shared her verbatim notes with code words like "clarity" and "closure" highlighted and had provided a brief note with examples identifying highlights of the lesson and things that could be worked on, such as "latency and delving," teachers seemed to disregard this information. These teachers, all at the beginning of their teaching careers, wanted identifiable markers they could use to know they were improving. While they appreciated positive feedback, they felt that something was lacking. One teacher compared two evaluations that highlighted this difference.

> The first evaluation was more like reinforcement than constructive criticism, and I got a lot of reinforcement saying, "You're doing a very good job, thank you, keep it up." The second evaluation was by the other evaluator who said, "You're doing a good job. Here is where you can improve," and I got a lot of information from this person in terms of teaching techniques—it helped quite a bit that way. When the principal came in it was very good for my ego. She said "You're doing a good job—keep it up"; the other one came in and tore me apart but he did it in such a way that it was very well done, it was very diplomatic, it was very constructive.

Only two teachers acknowledged the difference between the postconference feedback and the formal report.

> When they come into the classroom and do the evaluation and you've got your postconference it helps. But then when you come to your final one where they do a write-up and send it to central office, it just seems to be something which is very plain and doesn't seem to say anything.

The other was more pragmatic noting, "I guess it did boost my confidence. Maybe they don't want to print anything that would hurt you. In general, if there was a problem they wouldn't recommend you, I think that is what happened in the past."

Because these teachers found little in their formal evaluations to direct their learning as teachers, they were asked to identify other ways they had found to learn about teaching.

Other Learning Situations

In their discussions about alternative learning situations, teachers identified the importance of their colleagues to their own professional growth, most often through informal discussion and sometimes in cooperative planning and peer evaluation.

Informal Discussion

For most, informal discussion whether in the staff room or after school in a restaurant or bar was an essential learning tool. Many were single teachers in their first or second year of teaching and newly arrived in the community. Their social activities and professional work involved the same people and it was natural for the conversation to focus on things that had happened in school.

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Their most frequent source of information was "talking with colleagues," "interacting with fellow teachers," most often in the staff room, "just sitting in the staff room and listening to other teachers," "the staff room has always been a good place to share ideas." One teacher suggested that although this was beneficial, the administration should set up a more formal process of senior mentors: "There should be some sort of formal infrastructure set up within schools where senior teachers can act as sounding boards and not just over coffee. Someone you can go and talk to where it's their mandate, as it were." Not everyone appreciated the advice from veteran colleagues: "We are a pretty close-knit group, but a lot of the teachers that have been here for a while are old guard. It's not the most harmonious thing."

These teachers found their most useful guides in their neophyte colleagues. "There are a number of first- and second-year teachers here and we are a close knit group, and I socialize with my colleagues constantly; we get a lot of ideas going." Some preferred sharing problems and seeking advice in less public situations.

> Going out for coffee and bouncing ideas back and forth, that's very helpful too. Getting new ideas over a cup of coffee is a lot better than having an evaluation. You feel a lot more comfortable discussing it because it is not going on your record.

> If I have a bad class I think "OK, something is not working what can I do?" Then I talk to my colleagues They will give me ideas and I will discuss it with my husband—he is a teacher as well—because I'm more honest with him. It's a very personal job so it's hard to be totally honest with anyone, and secondly, when someone criticizes you, they are criticizing not just your work but your personality too so that makes it doubly difficult. It has to be someone you can trust, and I don't think that would ever be an administrator. They hire you, they have the power to fire you or do all kinds of other uncomfortable things

Some teachers used themselves as sounding boards for airing their problems. One described how he did a self-evaluation at the end of the day. Another teacher described the angst she felt when a class did not go smoothly. "When I have a bad class I think about it and I stew about it and talk about it to try to think about ways to make it different. But it affects me for a long time, and were I to count how may bad classes I actually have for a whole year, it still wouldn't be very many."

Students were an important source of information for a number of teachers. One teacher described how meeting students out of school, meeting their families, and noting the interpersonal relationships was useful. "Learning students' backgrounds helps me understand better something that happened in class." Another described how working with students out of school in extracurricular activities was another way he had enlarged his understanding of the students he taught. One teacher described how the students were a source of both problems and solutions, whereas another felt that too few teachers saw student input as valuable: "The kids have to have more input into these people who are teaching them. If 160 kids don't like a teacher, where there's smoke there's fire! It's not the kids, not all 160 of them, but nobody wants to hear that." He went on to emphasize how important students were to him:

> Students are the best indicators because that is why we are here; we aren't here to satisfy the administration, we aren't here for the benefit of the superintendent, we are here first and foremost for the students, for this school. We are not here for anyone else except for them and I think we lose sight of that sometimes. Every single day I remind myself. I'm here for the kids, I'm not here for other staff, I'm not here for the principal, I'm only here for the kids.

Some teachers sought out colleagues throughout the jurisdiction who taught a similar subject or grade. This was especially important for teachers who were new to a subject area and had few prepared resources.

> The thing that's had more impact on the way I teach is actually talking to other teachers. Because of the size of the district, there are only five or six teachers teaching the same thing, and once you get to know them, you can get on the phone and ask about the content or the topic and they will share.

Often these teachers also socialized together. "One teacher at another school has a different set of problems so it's incredible to see what he does and I bounce ideas off him and he talks to me." One teacher mentioned the benefits of marking diploma examinations.

Because of the size of the school, there were some opportunities for team planning. One teacher explained that she exchanged many ideas with a colleague who taught the same subject. Another described how all three teachers at one grade level "get together and share. We have developed some unit plans together and did a lot of work in a couple of areas." One veteran teacher shared her ideas with two neophyte colleagues: "I show them what I do and how I teach it—we're different people but we do help back and forth."

Peer Evaluation

Although a number of the teachers mentioned peer evaluation, and it had been discussed at a staff meeting, most of the teachers seemed to expect the administration to organize the process.

> We asked to do that. We have talked about it at staff meetings and that's what I would really like. I would prefer a peer.

> I would love it. I think it would be a great idea. Unfortunately, just the organization of it is almost impossible. Preps are few and far between and now they are talking of two preps per teacher per week, which is what I have this year. People are not going to want to give up their prep time to come in and watch me, and I don't blame them.
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> It seems to me that a lot of time we have great ideas and nothing happens. It doesn't seem to matter what our ideas are like. We have talked about having people come in and take videos of our classes, and unless you set it up yourself, it would never happen. And the same with peers coming in and watching. It never happens. I don't know why.

Even teachers who explained "I tend to learn by viewing, seeing how other people handle problems or progress through certain relationships" did not take the next step. "That's one thing, actually, that I've never done is to go into someone else's classroom and watch. And I can't remember if I've ever had anyone ask." Only two teachers described being involved in peer evaluations. One teacher had obtained valuable feedback from a colleague who had joined her class to provide extra assistance to some students. She concluded, "Some of the comments made were valuable and I integrated that into my teaching. I think most teachers would prefer to work with a peer." The other teacher had worked more collaboratively with a fellow teacher who was also a personal friend.

> I've asked to be evaluated more but they don't have the time so another teacher and I do go into each other's classrooms during spares sometimes and evaluate each other. No one else in the school does it. I find it much more beneficial. She gives the actual suggestions for things that I could be doing differently, makes me more aware of real, concrete things.

She compared this with feedback from her evaluator, which she found much more nebulous and explained,

> I think maybe it's because we are both teachers and we are both looking for teacher things and I think the principal, because she doesn't teach any more, I think she looks for the kind of thing—she looks to see if you have bulletin boards up in case parents come. She suggests things parents would look for more than actual teaching, whereas we look for the real classroom stuff rather than how pretty your walls look.

In this situation, the regular interchange had helped this teacher continue to explore her teaching in ways she found more concrete than those in her evaluation. Although she saw herself as isolated socially from other teachers on staff, she had found a means to obtain feedback that she valued and that continued her professional growth.

Other Sources

Two teachers mentioned the importance of professional literature in helping their professional growth. Another two had sought help from professional sports associations and much appreciated their services.

Besides these teacher-initiated informal activities, a number of formal opportunities for professional development were provided by the senior administration.

Professional Development

Asked about professional development activities teachers described their reactions to the jurisdiction's annual PD day in September.

Professional Development Day

As predicted by the vice-principal, teachers responses to the annual professional development day were mixed. One teacher who spoke positively of the experience felt that colleagues expected too much and hence were disappointed. For him, "I think if you go there and come away with one thing, then you're coming out OK." Some teachers went to the sessions but did not enjoy them because there was little to interest them. "I do go to the PD days but I'm not particularly fond of them either. I'd rather go to something that I'm interested in," said one, and another noted, "I just thought it was the same old stuff, different package. I didn't learn a darn thing," and a third made similar comments concluding that at least "It was a nice occasion to get together and share with my colleagues." Some teachers spoke of their regret that they did not have more opportunities to speak to professional colleagues in their own areas. They recognized that they were unlikely to have sessions tailored specifically to their interests "because we are too few—maybe five teachers in the jurisdiction who would be interested in a particular topic and that makes it very difficult." Because of the problem with numbers, explained another teacher, "The PD day here is geared more to the elementary."

Teachers' Convention

Besides the annual PD day, teachers in the jurisdiction also had the opportunity to attend the annual Teachers' Convention. As one teacher explained, "If you are willing to pay for yourself you can go. If you go the PD council they give you $500 but probably once every two to three years." All the teachers interviewed had attended the Convention. However, like the professional development day, their responses varied widely. For one, "The conference was a farce. There's nothing developing professionalism. A waste of money, a waste of time," but other teachers found sessions that were beneficial. One said, "There are usually a few good sessions that you can find to go to that are really helpful for what you are looking for—despite people saying there is nothing there," and another ended, "I know that some of my colleagues go down and don't find things interesting, but personally I've gone down and found things that have excited me." One teacher had attended a specialist conference and had found the experience helpful.

Workshops and Inservices

During the year, most teachers had the opportunity to attend at least one workshop in their own specialization. One teacher described her participation.

> Professional people come here and we all meet, like the language arts. That I find useful when all the teachers in the jurisdiction get together in grade levels and go over things and you spend a day at it. I find that to be very beneficial and it does help me improve.

Another teacher found that regardless of the content, "just talking to other teachers who described different instructional strategies has had a bigger impact on the way I teach classwise than any evaluation ever could. Because the evaluators, unless it is their area, are not able to say, "Try this activity"—they are going to say approach rather than a specific activity.

Two teachers described attending the workshops for Social Studies teachers. For one, it was "really boring," whereas a colleague described it as "really good. All the Social Studies teachers got together and offered information and resources they had available."

Problems

In their discussions of their evaluation experiences, the teachers identified problems or potential problems with the evaluation process and with their potential for professional development in general. In terms of the process, teachers described concerns surrounding time, whereas evaluators' concerns were about subject matter competence. They also identified lack of resources and lack of teacher development opportunities.

Time for the Process

Whereas one teacher talked about the tenseness of knowing the specific time of her classroom observation and the resulting unreality of the observed class, others identified the lack of time given to evaluation. One teacher was concerned that his evaluations had been all within a week or so and would have preferred that they had been spread out more to avoid "a bad week." Two other teachers had hoped or expected to be observed more often than had been the case. Although they felt that their own evaluations had been fair, one was concerned that the evaluator might not know the previous history of a teacher's interaction with a particular student and base the classroom evaluation on a particular problem the evaluator had observed, and "I think they are doing an injustice [to the teacher] in a sense." The other teacher made a general observation about the difficulty of doing any informal supervision when so many of the staff had to be formally evaluated.

> I think it's a problem because all the evaluation has to be built around a schedule, and it is very difficult for somebody who has a lot of work to do. We are snowed under—they have way too much work for them. We don't have the staff in some ways to cope with all the problems in school and then they have to evaluate us which puts a big load on them—25 teachers in the school, and if you have to evaluate four times, it's a sizeable job for someone to do every year.

This meant that many experienced teachers were not evaluated until the evaluations of first- and second-year teachers had been completed. As one noted,

> First-years are basically done first, and then you work your way up through second-years. With the ones who are on their third year or their fifth year or beyond, basically it's "If we get a chance we'll get to you." Normally, they leave it until May or June, but June is not a month you would want to be evaluated in, there are so many distractions, so many other things going on.

Another teacher who had been teaching for about 10 years spoke of her earliest evaluation experiences positively as "really beneficial." She described how in her first year of teaching the evaluator had "actually outlined how I should teach a unit. He diagrammed it and gave me notes and went back to his office and sent me copies of units that had been done by teachers and things like that." She found the next two evaluation experiences quite beneficial "but not as much as my previous year's." Her most recent experience was "just a sort of formal evaluation—a little one-page thing that was just written at the end of the year—and I couldn't learn anything from it."

Although these experienced teachers were unhappy at the small amount of time left for their evaluations, this was not the understanding of veterans held by some beginning teachers. One beginning teacher expressed concern that he would have to go through the procedure again and projected the resentment of more senior teachers:

> I don't know how far this evaluation goes. Do they evaluate past certification? I can see people being resentful if I was teaching four or five years and then having the principal coming in and evaluating me, especially if it was a case where I was teaching for longer than the principal. After two years of evaluation you should know your good points and your bad points and if you're slacking off, then you shouldn't do that in the first place.

Another appreciated receiving constructive criticism at this stage in his career but wondered whether he would be so accepting as a veteran teacher.

> It was very useful, but 10 years down the road I don't know if I will feel the same way. I know as you get older you feel that you are getting better. I'm used to being torn apart—everybody who comes out of university is—so it's not bad now.

In contrast, two other neophytes were concerned that teachers would not continue to be interested in improving their teaching.

> I think there could be a danger in this profession that people, after a number of years, particularly if they are in the same assignment, will begin to either rest on their laurels or coast along and do the same thing again and again when they could be challenging themselves professionally and personally to try to really better themselves.

The issue of motivation was more of a conundrum for the second teacher who saw it also as a lack of trust.

> I think that one of the biggest problems—and it's somewhat of a paradox— is that many teachers complain about having to teach with a closed classroom door. The paradox is that most of those same teachers do not want to teach with their classroom door open. The sad irony is that with the door open, they could be trusted to leave it closed.

Evaluator Competence

The other issue concerned the evaluator's subject matter competence. Teachers who taught in specialist areas recognized that it was impossible for the administrator to have a background in every subject, but felt that this meant that the evaluator could focus on teaching techniques only. Even this was not really successful because each specialization required different teaching strategies that were not necessarily appropriate for a regular classroom setting.

> I haven't been evaluated this year, but I discussed it with the principal, and it is very hard for someone to evaluate you when they don't have a clue as to what you are doing. You can't use any subject matter context as a basis for your evaluations, they have to do it basically on technique.

> If I were to set a percentage on the impact of evaluation on my teaching, I would have to say maybe 20% impact. They pointed out techniques like involving all the kids in the class, but in terms of curriculum I'd have to say no effect.

One teacher would have liked a veteran teacher in his own subject area who would know "about your time management, and proper techniques, and if I'm using visual and verbal aids" and who could "show me any way how to make it better." This was lacking in his present evaluations because "my principal comes in, but she doesn't have the content background so she can do classroom management skills, but I'm not in a classroom." One veteran teacher put it succinctly, saying "I would like to be evaluated by somebody who is knowledgeable in the areas that they are evaluating."

Lack of Resources

The issue of resources was a recurring theme, especially for beginning teachers. Some linked it with teacher development activities, recognizing that part of the problem was their lack of expertise in ways to extend and use the resources available. Some were teaching out of their prepared fields and had a limited background of instructional strategies and curriculum options from which to draw. Some found that the most current textbooks or teacher guides were unavailable. One teacher wished for "more teacher resources and more teacher development type of things so that you could actually get a lot of insight which would ultimately help you as a teacher." She went on to describe a lack of current social studies materials as well as teacher's guides. Part of these concerns may be linked to the teachers' limited repertoire of skills in lesson planning and lack of previously prepared resources. One teacher described his frustration: "I went to do research to prepare a good unit plan and there was nothing. The library had only elementary books, so I had to wait and go to a larger center." Only those teachers who taught sports and were able to contact provincial sports associations felt that they had a ready source of ideas and materials.

Suggestions

In the course of their discussions, teachers made a number of suggestions to improve the evaluation process. They suggested that evaluators could provide workshops that would help teachers be more cognizant of necessary skills and procedures: "Teaching styles, discipline, classroom management would be very useful. I think workshops are a good way because you have all your colleagues there as well so you don't get all the information from the presenter, but you also have a discussion and things you can try out on each other." One first-year teacher mentioned being part of a small group organized by the vice-principal and another senior teacher. Their objective was to develop strategies that would help make the first-year experience as positive as possible. The veteran teacher explained that initially they had focused on the development of trust, and that over time the teachers had identified such aspects as school policies on attendance and the procedures for staff meetings, which they felt should be shared with incoming teachers. As well as developing a policy and procedures manual for teachers, the group had also recommended a buddy system where new teachers were paired with second-year teachers who could help answer their questions informally. Other teachers also mentioned linking neophytes with veteran teachers: "For someone who knows the curriculum, someone who can help a new teacher set it up, they should use more people on staff. It's the idea of fostering more sharing, rather than 'It's your classroom, you're locked in there.'" Both of these suggestions not only provide opportunities for easing the concerns of the beginner, but also stress the development of a cooperative learning environment for teachers. The potential for change was echoed by another respondent who concluded, "I hope you can get enough information so that you can come up with some good proposals to fix this instead of just rearranging chairs on the *Titanic*."

Discussion

The staff at Mountain Spruce School were most often neophytes in teaching and in the community. As a result much of the administrators' time was taken up in following the formal evaluation process of a series of preconference, observation, postconference cycles. The process was well accepted by staff who appreciated hearing the process outlined prior to the beginning of the cycle and who had a general feeling of rapport with their evaluators. A number of themes emerge from their interviews.

A variety of evaluative strategies that encourage teacher growth were required by many teachers. Evident first was the ready acceptance of a regular, well-publicized evaluation routine for beginning teachers. Although it did not provide for many growth opportunities because of its highly orchestrated nature, it did mean that teachers continued to feel comfortable with observation of their teaching. However, veteran teachers more often sought a growth-oriented evaluation process, and specialist teachers were concerned that no one was able to assist them due to lack of knowledge and time. Teachers in these categories sought out colleagues throughout the jurisdiction when they wanted to discuss teaching.

Beyond the ritualistic nature of the formal evaluation cycle, what was also important was what the teachers termed *constructive criticism*. Having been assured that they had much of the "techniques of teaching" internalized, these teachers sought ways to continue to grow. They were familiar with aspects of teaching such as objectives, and anticipatory sets from their teacher preparation programs. They enjoyed the data on use of space, involvement of students, and questioning strategies because it gave them another way to consider their practice and perhaps a way of achieving greater control. They wanted further discussions on teaching that would go beyond the surface strategies. Many were not interested in the classroom environment; they wanted to focus on the teaching/learning process more directly. This they described as coming more often from the vice-principal who popped in informally and then followed up with specific ideas about the curriculum or about teaching.

Because so many of these teachers were relatively new to teaching, it might be expected that they had little in the way of professional resources of their own. They identified the issue of *lack of resources* in terms of physical resources for their planning but they also mentioned more workshops that would focus on ways to extend and use the limited resources they had available. At a time when teachers were beginning to experiment with instructional strategies other than full class teaching, the lack of possible resources was very limiting.

Opportunities for professional development, always an issue in a small jurisdiction, was another theme. While some teachers sought out ideas at the PD day and the Teachers' Convention, others rejected what they saw as too general or impractical. Although many enjoyed the PD day as a social event, and it was an opportunity to bring teachers throughout the division together, the preference was for workshops of colleagues. The great variation in reaction to the formal professional development activities raises questions about the need to *redesign professional development* to meet teacher needs.

These teachers had forged many informal networks to help them grow. They talked to colleagues both in the staff room and after school and sought advice and resources from colleagues in other schools. Yet when it came to participation in classroom planning, teaching, or evaluation, many looked to the administrators to set up the process. This frustration was shared by the principal who had not been able to initiate many in-school professional development activities because of the *time* taken up with the formal evaluation process. Given the amount of time and energy required to provide the detailed evaluation feedback that these teachers received, the administrators may well question whether their efforts were justified, especially when teachers thought they learned more from casual brief visits of 10 to 15 minutes followed by definite suggestions. Veteran teachers in particular were concerned at the lack of opportunity afforded them because of these time pressures to complete formal evaluations.

Reflections

Chinook is a small jurisdiction in terms of the numbers of teachers employed, and like many rural jurisdictions it has only a small secondary population. Furthermore, it has limited resources to provide the kinds of services available in large urban centers. Nonetheless, the three schools were modern buildings designed with children in mind with wide halls, natural lighting, large bulletin boards, and cheerful colors. The division had a policy on teacher evaluation that, if not particularly clear about formative and summative supervision and evaluation, was adhered to by the three principals, each of whom had developed a particular variation of the clinical cycle they were comfortable in employing. All the teachers who had been teaching under the previous policy spoke positively of the move to place evaluation in the hands of the administration. One reason for their support of the change was their positive relationship with their administrators who knew their work on al-

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most a daily basis. One group of teachers spoke of the principal as "not a visitor" to the classroom, and the administrators in the other schools also had good rapport with their staffs and were frequent visitors to classrooms. Specialist teachers and veteran teachers had concerns that evaluation did not reach the detail and complexity they desired to help them improve.

Although the teacher evaluations were thorough and gave detailed feedback on generic teaching strategies, teachers in general did not report that the evaluation cycle had influenced their teaching. They were pleased to have their competence confirmed, but only when the evaluation focused on issues of concern to them did they identify the process as particularly helpful. At the same time many teachers spoke about what they learned in informal discussions with one another, and some went so far as to suggest that these might be formalized in some way. Administrators in these schools had attempted to integrate the formal evaluation of teaching into their daily practices. Teachers welcomed them in their classrooms and were appreciative of their feedback. Where there was a high percentage of neophyte teachers on staff, the amount of personal attention administrators were able to give to each teacher diminished and teacher evaluation was more often viewed as an accountability measure. In contrast, where principals had been able to make observation and analysis of teaching a topic for general discussion among teachers, more opportunities for shared learning developed as teachers focused on their own professional growth.

Chapter 15

Summary and Implications for Action

Introduction

In 1984, Alberta Education developed a policy on teacher evaluation which stated that the performance of individual teachers and the quality of teaching practices across the province would be evaluated to assist in the provision of effective instruction to students and in the professional growth and development of teachers. The policy required school jurisdictions to have formally adopted their own teacher evaluation policies by June, 1985. This provincial initiative was in keeping with the context of the times where public concerns about teacher accountability were being voiced and where models of teacher evaluation and clinical supervision were prevalent in the literature. Teacher evaluation in Alberta has been the focus of several research studies (Reikie, 1977; Brophy, 1984; Duncan, 1986; Townsend, 1984; Hildebrandt, 1986; Foret & Hickey, 1987; Burger, 1988; Beaudry and Hrabi, 1989; Knight, 1991; Fegyverneki, 1990; Gogowich, 1992). Of those studies completed since the implementation of new jurisdictional policies in 1985, three focused on the provincial policy and its implementation while three others surveyed teachers and administrators in a single jurisdiction concerning their views on teacher evaluation. An examination of the impact of the Alberta Education policy on educators and students was considered appropriate given the length of time since the development of the original policies.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the provincial and local teacher evaluation policies on teachers and teaching and to study any linkages between teacher evaluation and educational leadership at the school and school system level. Specifically, the study question was framed as follows:

> What have been the primary effects of teacher evaluation policy and practices on teachers, administrators, personnel practices, system planning, staff relations and any other related aspects of the educational system and what recommendations for the improvement of teacher evaluation policies and practices are warranted?

From this initial question, eight other questions were identified to guide the study. They were clustered under four headings: policy and procedures, the teacher evaluation process, impact of teacher evaluation and linkages to educational leadership.

Policy and Procedures

1. What standards, criteria, and/or indicators have been developed and are commonly used to make judgements about teacher performance?
2. Are data collected from a variety of sources including an examination of the processes used in student evaluation?
3. What student outcomes do teachers and evaluators consider in determining the effectiveness of teaching practices?
4. To what degree are the standards, criteria and/or indicators being used to collect data about teacher performance acceptable to the teachers being evaluated?

The Teacher Evaluation Process

5. How is teacher evaluation conducted?

Impact of Teacher Evaluation

6. Is the practice of teacher evaluation improving the quality of instruction and education received by students?
7. To what extent do teachers use the results of teacher evaluations to reflect upon and/or to improve their teaching practices?

Linkages to Educational Leadership

8. In what ways do teachers and evaluators link the processes and outcomes of teacher evaluation to the process of educational leadership in the school and school system?

A review and critique of recent related literature, an analysis of jurisdictional policies, and interviews with stakeholders were conducted to provide background information for nine case studies. The case sites were jurisdictions throughout the province chosen to include differences in policies and procedures, in the size and type of jurisdiction, and in contextual factors including geographic area, language mix and population density. During the same period, a questionnaire survey of school and system educators and an interview survey of school trustees were conducted to obtain a general orientation to the same questions.

Since case studies formed the major data gathering method for the study, the findings for the research questions are contained within the texts of individual chapters. In the first section of this chapter, the eight key research questions are addressed individually to provide the reader with a general review of the study findings.

Generalizations could not be provided since to do so would deny the importance of individual contexts. Nonetheless, a detailed reading of all of the data findings chapters allowed for the surfacing of themes and patterns which are delineated in the second section of the chapter. Possible initiatives are outlined in section three.

Responding to the Questions

What have been the primary effects of teacher evaluation policy and practices on teachers, administrators, personnel practices, system planning, staff relations, and other related aspects of the educational system?

The eight research questions are addressed individually under the following headings: policy and procedures, the teacher evaluation process, the impact of teacher evaluation, and linkages to educational leadership. In responding to each of the eight questions a brief overview is provided.

Policy and Procedures

The questions in this group ask about the criteria themselves, what data are collected and whether student evaluations are part of the criteria, what student outcomes are examined and whether teachers find these criteria acceptable.

1. What standards, criteria and/or indicators have been developed and are commonly used to collect data to make judgements about teacher performance?

Responses in this section are reported under two headings—the types of criteria, and the uses of written criteria.

Types of Criteria

In the case studies, the teachers and administrators described criteria which had been developed for use in the teacher evaluation process. These varied in type and degree of specificity. Some policies had lists of teaching behaviors which were to be assessed; others provided more general indicators. Many policies included criteria, such as involvement in extra-curricular activities or appearance, which were not directly related to teachers' classroom teaching. Some teachers were unaware of jurisdictional criteria but knew the list of criteria used by the evaluator in assessing their teaching. Others did not know what specific criteria were used by their evaluator.

The analysis of jurisdictional policy documents revealed that 82% of jurisdictions specified evaluation criteria to be used in the teacher evaluation process. The County of Sunshine evaluation document was typical of many. It had four major sections: teaching strategies, personal and professional qualities, educational growth of pupils and contributions to the school and the community. The first section, teaching strategies, included criteria on classroom observation, the planning process, the physical environment, teacher directed learning activities, the learning environment and classroom management, and student evaluation and feedback. The section on personal and professional qualities identified such criteria as appearance, attitude and enthusiasm, knowledge of the subject area, and ability to motivate. Educational growth of students, the third section, listed degree of student access, cooperation, enthusiasm and involvement, overall attitude, and appropriateness of student dress as relevant criteria. All final reports were filed in the County office.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Poplar Plains School District policy which did not specify any criteria required that all personnel be evaluated once a year by the immediate supervisor, and that the extent to which expected outcomes had been achieved should be documented. Reports remained confidential between principal and teacher unless the teacher or the principal chose to send the file forward to the Personnel Section in Central Office.

Some jurisdictions used a dichotomous final assessment of Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory while others employed a scale having three to five assessment options from Excellent to Unsatisfactory.

Use of Written Criteria

Most jurisdictional policies had written criteria; however, the case studies revealed that administrators varied in the ways they employed their jurisdictions' procedures. Some evaluators assessed on each criterion; others chose from the list or asked teachers to choose those items on which they wished to be assessed. Some had developed their own lists of criteria which they shared with teachers. Some evaluators did not attempt to assess teachers on all the written criteria but did provide data under each of the main sections.

Respondents to the questionnaire survey similarly indicated that some written criteria were used frequently in the teacher evaluation process. The items involving written criteria included, in order, teacher behavior, lesson planning, teacher professional development, student performance, and testing and other student evaluation. Over 40% of respondents considered that written criteria for student performance, and testing or other student evaluation were used slightly or not at all.

In some instances where no written criteria were used, teachers and evaluators engaged in a process of goal-setting. Sometimes these reflected school-wide initiatives; in other instances the focus was specific to the teacher's professional growth. Often, the teacher identified the criteria which would be used to assess how well the goal had been met.

2. Are data collected from a variety of sources including an examination of the processes used in student evaluation?

Responses in this section address the variety of data gathering strategies, formal and informal visits, and student evaluation.

Variety of Data Gathering Strategies

According to the survey respondents, classroom observation was ranked most frequently as the means by which evaluators sought information for teacher evaluations. The other major source of information for the majority of teachers and administrators was the reviewing of lesson plans. Of the survey respondents, 25% thought the evaluator sought information from superordinates, but very few people thought evaluators sought information from their colleagues or by testing students. In the case studies, teachers and evaluators described how evaluative information was obtained through the analysis of documents, such as yearly, monthly and daily plans; grade books; student assignments; and report cards. In gathering data, evaluators employed a variety of formats including verbatim scripting and charts of student behavior or teacher movement. Some teachers described how evaluators used audio and videotapes as data collection devices to assist the teachers see what was happening in their classrooms. Some evaluators, most often at the elementary level, participated in the lesson either by co-teaching or by working with children.

Formal and Informal Visits

Classroom observation was part of the formal evaluation process for 91% of the survey respondents. Jurisdictional policies differed on the issue of whether teachers had to be informed when formal classroom observations would take place. Principals in elementary schools often paid daily informal visits to all classrooms. Most teachers did not view these as part of their formal evaluation. Administrators more often acknowledged that in some sense they were always evaluating what was happening whether in the halls, on the playground or in the classes. The number of informal visits to classrooms tended to decrease with increasing grade level. The case studies document few informal visits by high school administrators. Some administrators reported that they tended to spend more time not only with neophyte teachers, but also with those who were more willing to participate in the teacher evaluation process and those where the quality of the relationship was positive. In some jurisdictions, central office staff paid surprise visits to classrooms both on an informal basis and to obtain formal evaluation data.

The evaluation reports required information other than that observable in the classroom. Much of the information about the teacher's involvement in out-of school and professional development activities was available only through evaluators' informal daily contacts with teachers or directly from the teachers themselves.

Student Evaluation

Two of the items most frequently reviewed in the teacher evaluation process were the teacher's plan book and student evaluation results. Sometimes these were specifically identified as separate items on the evaluation report; most often they were part of the procedure used by the principal to assess adequate preparation of lessons and sufficient and appropriate grading practices. Sometimes, teachers identified self-assessment of students' daily work as their major source of feedback about their teaching. From the survey findings, over 80% of teachers and administrators indicated that teacher evaluation was based on the teacher's planning and preparation to a great extent although administrators rated this item more highly than teachers. Of the two survey items dealing with student evaluation, approximately 63% of respondents thought that student behavior, and all-round student development were used from a moderate to a great extent in assessing teacher performance. In the case studies, although they discussed reviewing teachers' plans, neither teachers nor administrators mentioned specifically the review of tests and assignments. However, examination of the jurisdictions' criteria showed that items such as "prepares appropriate test and evaluation activities to measure student learning," and "interprets own tests and evaluation activity accurately," were mentioned frequently.

3. What student outcomes do teachers and evaluators consider in determining the effectiveness of teaching practices?

Based on the survey results and the experiences recounted in the cases, student outcomes are not considered directly to any great extent in the teacher evaluation process. This is not to say that they are disregarded. Of the survey respondents, while 20% indicated that examination results of students were not used in their assessments, 40% thought that student examination results were used to a moderate or great extent in assessing teacher performance. This may have happened indirectly. Most principals talked about reviewing report cards as part of their general monitoring of the school and some high school principals noted that reading report cards gave them a lot of information about the types and quality of student assessment used by individual teachers. From the teachers' point of view, the most frequently assessed student behaviors were process rather than outcome indicators: classroom discipline, student-teacher / student-student interaction and student in-class assignments. These, too, appeared frequently on the lists of teacher evaluation criteria. Those teachers who had set their own professional goals often described using student achievement and growth as markers for their success. They noted that by focusing on these goals they were more likely to stress the activities necessary to achieve them, a process which benefitted their students.

4. To what degree are the standards, criteria, and/or indicators being used to collect data about teacher performance acceptable to the teachers being evaluated?

Responses to this question relate to problems with criteria, the subjective nature of judgment, knowledge of the policy, the expertise of the evaluator and issues of fairness.

Problems with Criteria

Teachers varied in their response to the issue of the acceptability of the criteria in that most of their concerns were not with the criteria themselves. Some experienced teachers spoke out strongly against the use of criteria which assessed the basic teaching skills of veteran teachers. They felt insulted that anyone would consider that they did not have these skills after ten or more years of successful teaching, and they often saw the evaluation process as a waste of time for administrator and teacher because it denied their growth as professionals. Some teachers identified the unique circumstances in their own or in other classrooms within their jurisdiction and wondered how administrators were able to assess teaching practice in these situations. Some of the teachers, e.g, guidance counsellors, whose major responsibilities did not involve regular classroom instruction thought that there were no criteria which adequately assessed their contribution to their students' education. This was also mentioned by a few administrators.

Subjective Nature of Judgment

Teachers were concerned less about the criteria identified in their policies than about their assessment on these criteria which they saw as being very subjective. Teachers who identified a lack of rapport, trust or contact with their evaluators, told stories of putting on shows for administrators, or of using a routine, secure lesson rather than risk displaying the strategies they normally employed. Teachers who felt positively towards their school-based evaluators described putting a special effort into the occasion also. The teachers explained these different behaviors as efforts on their part to allay their anxiety and to fulfil a need to present themselves as professionals. Principals, aware of these special preparations, explained them as stemming from the teachers' desire to do their best and to show off. Because evaluation was seen as subjective, the quality of the relationship with the evaluator was frequently mentioned. Many teachers described the stress felt when the rapport between teacher and administrator was absent, a point of frustration for the administrators also.

Knowledge of the Policy

Evident in many of the cases and in the interviews was the fact that teachers and sometimes administrators and trustees had only limited knowledge of the jurisdictional policy on teacher evaluation. While in some jurisdictions administrators made it a practice to sit down with teachers who were to be evaluated and inform them of the process, in others, teachers were expected to read the policy for themselves in the policy handbook. As mentioned earlier, teachers in the latter instance did not have an opportunity to explore with evaluators what specific procedures would be used or to discover how administrators had adapted the listed criteria.

Expertise of the Evaluator

The ability of the administrator to evaluate was also a topic of discussion. Some teachers thought that their evaluators had limited expertise in the area of evaluation and lacked documentation strategies other than verbatim scripting. Others mentioned the lack of knowledge of current teaching practices. Some teachers preferred evaluators who were knowledgeable in their subjects and were able to offer advice and guidance. This was mentioned by teachers from all grades although the lack of knowledge of a specialization was most pronounced for junior and senior high school teachers and lack of recent classroom experience was a factor for elementary teachers.

Fairness

Despite these strongly held opinions about the utility of the present process, teachers generally rated their own evaluations as fair, although they often added that the system could be easily abused and they knew of instances where others had been less fortunate. Their use of words such as lucky or fortunate suggested the speculative and risky nature of the process to them. On the questionnaire survey, approximately 60% of teachers rated their own evaluations as fair and just "to a great extent" and a further 30% rated them as "moderately" fair and just. Those teachers who worked within a policy which required that areas of improvement be identified expressed their concern that they were always viewed as deficient. Those teachers who thought that there was an underlying assumption of their competence prior to their evaluations did not discuss the fairness of the process but instead focused on the extent of their own professional growth.

The Evaluation Process

The question in this section explores the nature of the teacher evaluation process.

5. How is teacher evaluation conducted?

The information associated with this question is discussed under five headings: the evaluation process, the factors associated with wide variation in evaluations, evaluation as accountability, evaluation as instructional improvement, and monitoring the evaluators.

Format of the Evaluation Process

The process most frequently employed in teacher evaluation was some combination of classroom observations and conferences between evaluator and teacher, and culminated in their discussion of a final report. As the policy analysis study indicated, a preconference was required in 29% of the policies and suggested in another 15%. A post-conference was required in 61% and suggested in 11%. Sixty-eight percent of the policies required the evaluator to specify an evaluation time and 5% of policies forbade unannounced visits. The frequency of evaluation decreased as the length of teaching experience of the teacher increased. Whereas 67% of the policies required that new or probationary teachers be evaluated between once (19%) and three times or more (16%) in a year, the figure for permanent certification was lower (54%) overall, with a higher proportion of policies requiring that teachers with permanent certification be evaluated once (29%) rather than three or more times (8%) a year.

In practice, post-conferences were held more frequently than pre-conferences. As indicated in the survey findings, approximately half (56%) of those administrators and teachers indicated that they were involved in preconferences to a great extent as part of their teacher evaluation process; the proportion was higher for administrators (69%) than for teachers (43%). A larger percentage of both groups (79%) agreed that they participated in post-conferences to a great extent. Seventy-four percent were informed when evaluations were to take place, and for 89% the process involved classroom observations. Approximately two-thirds of the teachers surveyed indicated that their evaluators used a consistent set of forms and procedures. All but three of the teachers in the survey had been evaluated in the previous four years and 88% had received copies of their final reports.

Factors Associated with Wide Variation

Detailed information about teacher evaluations is presented in the case study reports where teachers have described both recent and pre-1985 evaluations. Even in jurisdictions where there is a standard policy, many of the procedures used in teacher evaluation are left to the discretion of the principals. The grade level of the school seems to be another important contextual variable as are the culture of the school and the place of evaluation in that culture. In one case study, the teachers referred to their evaluators as strangers to their worlds, and visitors to their classrooms. This was less often the case when teachers and administrators had frequent interactions in the classrooms and where the focus of the evaluator's observations had been discussed beforehand.

Some teachers spoke about the artificiality of situations where they were required to teach a lesson which matched the evaluator's criteria but not their teaching style, or where evaluators demanded evidence of all six steps to effective teaching in one classroom period although the teachers usually took several class periods to work through them.

Teachers who had been teaching for more than 10 years often had less recent experiences with teacher evaluation. For some, those older experiences have strongly influenced their present views and have helped to sustain the many "stories" about teacher evaluation shared by teachers. Some neophyte teachers who have been provided with clear descriptions of the procedures in an atmosphere of collegiality and affirmation expressed fewer concerns, but many experienced teachers remained wary of teacher evaluation. They had experienced the subjectivity of judgments about their practice and often spoke about the stress and anxiety engendered by teacher evaluation.

Evaluation as Accountability

Evident in the case studies were situations where the evaluator's major objective was to gather the appropriate information necessary to document teacher performance in case of challenges from parents or of litigation. Teachers described similar experiences where the teacher evaluation process was solely to provide a form of public accountability and where teacher evaluation was unconnected to their life in classrooms.

Where teachers described their experiences as necessary only to meet a requirement of the board, or to fulfil the government policy, they seldom described these experiences in positive terms. As described by some teachers, the hidden agenda of teacher evaluation was to control and silence them by using evaluation to identify those "marked for export," that is, those teachers who would be transferred should an opportunity arise. More frequently teachers described the teacher evaluation process as game playing on the part of the administrator and as a competition in which they felt compelled to play. Teachers who were evaluated by administrators external to the school were less positive about their experiences unless they had had frequent contact with these people. Several teachers noted the negative tone to teacher evaluation when, according to the jurisdictional policy, the evaluator was required to identify a target area, which in the teachers' experience meant documenting an area of weakness.

Evaluation as Instructional Improvement

Where teachers described the major foci of their evaluation experiences as the enhancement of their teaching and the improvement of learning for their students, they described their administrators as assisting in their instructional improvement. These situations less frequently followed a set pattern but seemed to be tailored to the specific circumstances of the school, grade level, teaching subject and, above all, to the teacher's needs. Often, the specific feedback, whether observational data or instructional options, led to direct changes in teachers' approaches to teaching and teachers considered that it helped them improve the learning opportunities for students. In some instances, teachers felt that the formal requirements of the evaluation process interfered with their ongoing professional growth by imposing an artificial formality on observations and reports on an informal process which had become embedded in their everyday life in schools. In other situations, administrators were encouraged to assist in reviews of teaching practices, an activity often without direct reference to the teacher evaluation process.

Monitoring the Evaluators

Evident in many of the situations described by teachers and administrators was the two edged nature of the evaluation process. Just as administrators observed teachers, teachers described monitoring evaluators, trying to decide what they found to write about and estimating how the evaluators were seeing their present actions.

Impact of Evaluation

The questions in this section ask about the impact of teacher evaluation on the quality of education for students, and on the improvement of instruction of teachers.

6. Is the practice of teacher evaluation improving the quality of instruction and education received by students?

Findings related to the impact of teacher evaluation on the quality of instruction, evaluation for student growth, and evaluation for accountability are discussed in response to this question.

Impact on the Quality of Instruction

Although 89% of the jurisdictional policies declared that improvement of instruction was the purpose of teacher evaluation, and survey respondents similarly rated it as the first goal of teacher evaluation, there were also considerable data to suggest that the relationship between improvement of instruction and teacher evaluation was tenuous in practice. The survey respondents rated the impact of evaluation on the quality of instruction third, but the impact on student achievement last in a list of seven items.

Teachers and administrators had mixed views about the impact of teacher evaluations on the quality of instruction. Some administrators, who had taken the task of teacher evaluation seriously, concluded that the benefits did not seem to be worth the effort. Teachers, even those supportive of the process, reported that evaluation while providing a "pat on the back" did not bring lasting changes to their teaching.

Evaluation for Student Growth

Teachers discussed circumstances where they had experienced growth and had seen positive changes in students, but even where this happened, student growth was viewed more often as a by-product of evaluation rather than a direct result. Teachers described learning new planning strategies, different ways to discipline, and alternative instructional strategies, and gaining more information about their own actions. They talked about the greater attention they gave to their work which they saw as honing their skills. In those jurisdictions which encouraged goal-setting, teachers, through the documentation of the attainment of specific goals and the information they had gathered about the growth of their students, were able to confirm that they were better teachers .

Evaluation for Teacher Accountability

Where teachers did not feel supported by the evaluator or considered that the process was a hoop to be jumped through, student growth was seldom mentioned as an outcome. Instead these teachers described situations where the focus of the evaluation seemed to be themselves and their actions, and where the behavior of their students and interaction patterns in the classroom were used as proxy data to assess their effectiveness as teachers. While some trustees thought that their teacher evaluation policy was having an effect in classrooms and in enhancing teacher competence, others insisted that evaluations had made little difference. Some trustees seemed to measure the effectiveness of the policy in terms of their success in removing teachers for incompetence.

7. To what extent do teachers use the results of teacher evaluations to reflect upon and/or improve their teaching practices?

In discussing the use of feedback about teaching, respondents commented on a reaffirmation of their philosophy, the psychological benefits, reactions to feedback, feedback as criticism, and the importance of school culture.

Reaffirming their Philosophy

Many teachers interviewed in the case studies admitted that they had read their evaluations, filed them, and had not thought of them since. Regardless of whether teachers described positive or negative experiences associated with teacher evaluation, they acknowledged that the experience of being up for review caused them to reexamine their teaching strategies, the activities they had planned, how successful they were as teachers, their impact on their students' learning and their involvement in school affairs. For some teachers this reflection happened between the time they were told that they would be evaluated and receiving their final report; in other situations where surprise visits were the norm, teachers found themselves going through these questions after the observation. Despite the stress and anxiety which many teachers associated with their classroom observations, they said that they found this process of self-reflection helpful in confirming those aspects of their practice where they knew they were successful and in refocusing their efforts to improve in areas which may have become routine. Where jurisdictions had included a self-evaluation section, teachers often took the time to ponder the questions because this allowed them to review and reestablish their teaching philosophy rather than focus on daily issues.

The Psychological Benefits

Most teachers identified the most common benefit of teacher evaluation as the psychological pat on the back which confirmed that others valued their services. Although this boost did not last, a number of teachers considered it to be confidence building and saw it as giving them the necessary initiative to try new strategies in their classrooms. For those teachers who had little faith in the process, the report was considered either as a routine document of passing interest, or as one which brought relief and a certain satisfaction that despite personal or philosophical differences, their evaluators had not been able to find fault with them. The process was a confirmation of the status quo.

Reactions to Feedback

In terms of the information provided by the evaluator, teachers often commented that this feedback had little impact on their teaching because there was little which provided directions for growth. Some teachers found the comments insulting and unsettling because they seemed to indicate that their evaluators were out of touch with the circumstances of the classes they observed. Occasionally, they found aspects of the description inaccurate. In situations where teachers had confidence in the expertise of their evaluators, they described specific circumstances where they had learned skills and strategies which had directly aided their teaching. Teachers who saw evaluation as an opportunity to stretch themselves and try different strategies welcomed feedback which would help them improve and expand their repertoires.

Feedback as Criticism

Teachers' reactions to how much information for future growth should be on evaluation forms varied widely. Some felt that evaluations which did not provide this kind of information were useless and a waste of time, while other teachers did not want such potentially critical information on a form which they might need as a reference. In situations where recommendations for improvement were required by district policy, teachers felt that, regardless of their own proficiency, evaluators had to find something which needed improvement or the form would be returned. They preferred situations where that information was provided separately in informal circumstances. In a number of instances, beginning teachers did not seem to understand the difference between reports on individual evaluation cycles and the final report which was forwarded to central office.

The Importance of the School Culture

Many teachers used their teacher evaluation experience as an opportunity to reflect on their philosophy and practice but, unless there was a school culture which supported discussion and reflection about their practices, few teachers were able to sustain this beyond their preparation for the experience of being observed. A school culture which supported teachers' exploration of their teaching, where annual goal-setting was practised, and where teachers themselves had set high standards for their teaching proved to be essential to sustaining this practice. Even then, the exigencies of administrivia, and the scarcity of available time, both for administrators to visit and for teachers to share and spend time in each other's classrooms, threatened these opportunities.

Leadership and Teacher Evaluation Linkages

In this section, the question of the importance of school and system support in teacher evaluation is explored.

8. In what ways do teachers and evaluators link the processes and outcomes of teacher evaluation to the process of educational leadership in the school and school system?

Responses to this question are discussed under the headings of linkage variability, and principals as key.

Linkage Variability

The cases studies document the importance of the direction and support provided by school system personnel to principals. First, the provision of on-going professional development for administrators on teacher evaluation seemed to be haphazard. While some jurisdictions made a practice of providing professional development opportunities for school administrators to enhance their teacher evaluation skills, other administrators acknowledged that there had been little jurisdictional effort to provide opportunities to enhance their skills in this area since the implementation of the jurisdictional policy. Second, the extent to which teachers received copies of the policy and were given adequate explanations about what happened to their report after they signed it varied widely also. For example, one senior administrator did not think it necessary for teachers to be told the specifics of the policy.

Principals as Key

The integration of teacher evaluation into school-based professional development activities seemed to be left to principals. While central office administrators encouraged principals to develop these initiatives, there were seldom any additional resources in time or money available to implement them. Even when such resources were available, the principal's philosophy was a crucial influence on the extent to which teacher professional development was seen as a daily practice in the school or left to the teachers to orchestrate in their out of school hours. In the same way, despite principals' initiatives to develop a learning culture in their schools, they were cognizant of individual teachers who had difficulty in accepting these initiatives. The bases for these differences included philosophical differences about the involvement of others in the teacher's classroom, a lack of trust, and teachers' unwillingness to reveal potential weaknesses when they considered themselves to be specialists and thought the principal lacked the expertise to assist them. Where the teacher was obviously competent but refused to stretch and develop new strategies and skills, some administrators felt powerless to intervene without disturbing the culture of the school.

In general, the impact of the provincial policy on teacher evaluation has been positive, but the teacher evaluation process is only beginning to evolve from a discrete task to be done in order to comply with board and provincial policy to one that is an integral part of the leadership goals of the school and the system. There is more discussion now about the teacher evaluation process and about teaching at both school and system levels. Evaluators visit classrooms more often, and the initial use of checklists as a means of documenting teacher behaviors has been replaced by an emphasis on verbatim transcription of events as they occur in classrooms. Some administrators employ a clinical supervision cycle of pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation discussion, but most hold a general meeting at the beginning of the year and then follow up a series of observations with one post-observation discussion of the preliminary report.

Because of the legal ramifications involved in teacher dismissals, most policies describe detailed procedures to be used where the teacher is at risk of being declared incompetent. Trustees, some of whom thought that the major intent of their policy was to aid in the dismissal of incompetent teachers, considered that not enough emphasis had been placed on this aspect. Other trustees noted the benefits of what they perceive to be greater classroom involvement of principals and supervisors in the teacher evaluation process.

A teacher evaluation process that emphasized technical competencies was welcomed by beginning teachers but was considered inadequate in providing for the professional growth of experienced teachers. Veteran teachers sought more information from subject specialists, greater autonomy in deciding on the focus of the evaluation, and appreciated the support provided where their growth was linked to school improvement goals. Experienced teachers who spoke positively about the benefits of teacher evaluation were most often in situations where the process of teacher evaluation was closely embedded in school and teacher development plans and was based on beliefs about the importance of continuing professional growth for competent teachers.

Where teacher professional development and teacher evaluation have been linked to individual and school improvement plans, educators and students, and ultimately the community, have benefited from the commitment to excellence that the process engenders.

Themes and Patterns in Teacher Evaluation

Following the preliminary completion of the cases, the researchers met to share experiences and describe their findings. From those conversations and from subsequent readings of all the completed studies, themes and patterns began to emerge. They are documented in this section under the following headings: relationships, the world of the classroom, the purpose of evaluation, the evaluator as expert and school cultures for professional growth.

Relationships

The studies in this report reinforce the notion that teacher evaluation involves the relationship of two people both of whom must share a willingness to participate in and an understanding of the process. When either person was unable or unwilling to participate fully in the venture, the process had little chance of success. This speaks to the importance of trust in such relationships. A lack of understanding of the process due to lack of information or to the deliberate manipulation of information suggests that one partner in the relationship seeks to retain power. These two aspects, lack of trust and retention of power, were combined in situations where the policy provided for unannounced visits based on the belief that teachers would put on a show if they were forewarned. This belief carried the implication that teachers were not to be trusted and were usually weak or lazy and needed to be caught in the act. Even where this belief about teachers putting on a show was not fully accepted, the policy reinforced the power of the evaluator who was relieved of the need to make and keep appointments with teachers. Stories of external evaluators who walked into classrooms unannounced and proceeded to sit at teachers' desks are examples of the reinforcement of this power relationship.

Most teachers described negative situations as lacking in trust; these were often situations where power and

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control seemed the hidden agenda. Some teachers, by their unwillingness to participate, their ability to provide what they thought the administrator wanted to see, or their reluctance to reveal information about their teaching, retained control of these situations. Even in more trusting situations, teachers retained a certain watchfulness and evaluators were aware that they too were being evaluated.

Teachers did not view the process of teacher evaluation neutrally. They entered these situations and interpreted what happened to them in the light of what they already knew about teacher evaluation. Veteran teachers had their own experiences and were able to relate stories they had heard from others. Most neophyte teachers had previous positive experiences in their teacher preparation programs and some had been involved in specific programs for beginning teachers to help orient them to teacher evaluation. They, like probationary teachers, knew that a negative evaluation could mean the end of their careers. Their previous experiences affected the readiness of teachers to consider alternative forms of professional development as genuine and not further traps for the unwary.

Also affecting the orientation of teachers towards their relationship with evaluators were their own views on the authority of the principal. Equally, some administrators by their actions signalled to teachers their devaluation of the teachers' expertise. Administrators who chose to act as if they had the final word in most situations demanded from teachers a compliance to their views. Similarly, some teachers tried to wrestle a similar compliance from their evaluators. Where relationships were temporary, private, isolated, and divorced from teachers' working realities and from life in schools, negotiations of power, trust, and expertise were never far from the surface.

In contrast, teachers in situations where they were recognized as competent and given responsibility for identifying their own professional goals, described the process as both positive and challenging. They enjoyed the support of the administrator and of their teaching colleagues in establishing goals which not only enhanced their teaching but which also often contributed to the achievement of school-wide goals. In these schools, teachers were anxious to share with one another because of the benefits they obtained in talking and working with colleagues.

The World of the Classroom

Many descriptions of classroom observations included comments that visits were too few and that administrators did not know how to read what was happening in classrooms because they lacked sufficient information about students' academic and social progress, and about the students' past relations with their teachers. Much of the anxiety faced by teachers seemed to stem from their recognition of the evaluator not only as a stranger to their world, but also as one whose preferences about instructional strategies, classroom interaction, the physical environment and planning options were not known. In an effort to become informed, some administrators required a level of specificity in long-term planning which teachers found unnecessarily confining. Also evident were experiences where administrators made pronouncements about situations without asking teachers for relevant information and explanations. Teachers regarded these statements as useless and demeaning. They felt left without a voice in a process whose outcome was an assessment of their competence as professionals and of their own self-worth.

At the same time, evaluators found themselves in situations where they felt demeaned because they knew the classroom activities they were observing had been especially orchestrated for their visit. Just as some teachers saw the evaluator as stranger, evaluators in these situations felt cut off from the everyday life of classrooms. The inability to talk honestly to each other was also present in experiences where teachers felt mute in the face of evaluators' comments which were to them a distortion of the situation. Teachers in these circumstances thought carefully about making comments on evaluation reports and most often chose not to write how they felt in case their reactions destroyed already fragile working relationships. Administrators described similar feelings of frustration at being unable to speak out about things they hoped teachers would change because of the potential impact of such an altercation on the school community. As many case studies confirm, both people have to be willing and able to participate and be informed about the process if teacher evaluation is to be of value. Trustees, too, reflected some of this ambiguity in their frustrations about the lack of adequate documentation which led to difficulties in removing teachers for incompetence. Some wished that administrators were more willing to clearly document inadequate practice.

The Purpose of Teacher Evaluation

The duality of ensuring the basic competence of educators and of promoting instructional improvement clashed in many of the experiences related in the case studies. In most of the policies, the amount of emphasis placed on each one was decided by the evaluators, most often the school administrators. The degree of emphasis on each objective was not always shared with or agreed to by teachers. Trustees, in general, saw the purpose of teacher evaluation as helping teachers improve, a purpose which was often described as a spur or a means to straighten teachers out. Other trustees linked teacher evaluation more closely to professional development but also saw it as a two-step process of discovering inadequacies and applying remediation.

As might be expected, differing expectations for the teacher evaluation process were a source of frustration within the teacher-evaluator relationship. While some policies had complicated procedures for formative and summative evaluations, these distinctions tended to be ignored in practice. Teachers and principals were both aware that reading situations and assessing what was happening were constant activities of principals. Administrators described situations where, in order to be true to the intent of the policy, they did not provide informal supervision for teachers who were to be formally evaluated. Teachers also found these situations ambiguous and described the danger of identifying a weakness and asking for help from one's evaluator. Based on the policies, it is the administrator/evaluator who decides whether a particular process is formative or summative and who can switch from one process to the other depending on the situation. The power to decide remains with the evaluator; the teacher is a passive element in the process and for teachers the process is always potentially summative. It is in this sense that present use of these distinctions of formative and summative are detrimental to a positive process. Most policies stress that formative evaluations are not to be used for summative purposes but this ignores the reality of schools where both teacher and principal are constantly assessing and evaluating what goes on whether in the classroom or on the playground, and where teachers who have positive formative evaluations want this information included in their final reports.

Many veteran teachers found a major emphasis on the examination of basic competencies which fulfilled the intent of the policy to be of limited utility. They appreciated the incentive to reflect on their teaching and reexamine their practices but they felt that observations which did not provide them with information for their own growth were irrelevant and wasteful of the time of both teachers and evaluators. On the other hand, some neophyte teachers were more appreciative of situations where evaluators assessed basic skills. Some of these beginning teachers spoke about instances where their evaluators had coached them to greater skill development through a series of observations and conferences. In some jurisdictions, administrators felt that they had sufficient sources of information to identify teachers who were weak and needed direct support, and so dispensed with this monitoring function for all teachers. Instead they described working from a belief in teacher competence, a positive rather than a deficit model of teacher evaluation.

Administrators spoke of their annoyance at experienced teachers who wanted their evaluation to be confined to those skills which were already well established in their teaching repertoires. These teachers used the vocabulary of the evaluation criteria. Evaluators' question to these teachers, "What would you like me to look at?" too often brought them replies like "closure" or "reaching all students in interactions" which administrators read as signals that they were neither welcome nor their feedback valued.

What all these experiences speak to is the importance of the relationship between evaluator and teacher, the need for mutual understanding about process and criteria at school and system levels, and the recognition that no single group has ultimate control of the teacher evaluation process.

The Evaluator as Expert

Whether evaluators adopted the orientation of an evaluation expert or of a facilitator for teachers' growth, teachers held certain expectations about their competence to do these things. Where the thrust of the teacher evaluation policy was the improvement of classroom skills, evaluators were expected to be able to identify how to gather appropriate information and to assist teachers in interpreting these data. Both observational and consultative skills were required. Where administrators provided verbatim scripts but did not discuss with teachers how to read these descriptions, teachers felt the time had been for naught. Teachers were equally annoyed at administrators who used the data from one class to generalize to their entire teaching practice. System administrators were also dissatisfied with teachers who tailored lessons to their presence.

Where administrators sought to watch the teacher rather than to observe the learning situation, teachers felt compelled to provide a teacher directed lesson although this may not have been their most frequent instructional strategy. The subjective nature of the evaluation was lessened a little when teachers were aware of what administrators considered good teaching to be and when they believed that principals through their own teaching assignments or through reputation, were themselves good teachers.

Many teachers spoke about the need for the evaluator to be cognizant of the current teaching situation in schools and knowledgeable in the subjects they observed. These comments are indicative of a particular philosophical stance about learning in schools. They suggest that beyond the development of basic teaching competencies related to planning, group process, student interaction, and evaluation, teachers are expected to be knowledgeable not only about the content but also the pedagogies of their various teaching subjects. One example was the concern of second language teachers that evaluators would not understand why they encouraged a higher "noise" level or why they had envelopes of cards in their hands. Another example which recognized this viewpoint was the planning in some high schools to have those administrators who had taught certain subjects be the evaluators for teachers in those subject areas.

Although the importance of the evaluator as a subject specialist was mentioned most often by secondary teachers, elementary teachers also recognized that recent changes in curriculum reinforced the need for administrators who were cognizant of these initiatives. Experienced teachers described being disappointed in their evaluations because they wanted to expand their teaching repertoires. They looked to evaluators to be able to identify some of those newer strategies.

School Cultures for Professional Growth

Stories of teacher growth most often included references to the school culture. Unlike the experiences of teacher evaluation where individual assessment was considered apart from the daily life of schools, these teachers with stories of teacher growth described situations where the orientation of the school as a learning community was the major impetus for their continued development. Staff in these schools had a strong commitment to learning and held high expectations of each other, and of their students. They spoke about being learners themselves and about being encouraged to focus their professional development by setting a goal for themselves for the year. In some schools, the major focus for these goals was established by the school staff. It might be a particular curriculum area such as whole language or a teaching strategy such as cooperative learning. Together, the staff spent time discussing their plans and progress. Working directly with colleagues and discussing their work with other members of staff were frequently mentioned by teachers as the ways they preferred to learn. When the school fostered the development of collegiality through mutual help and support, teachers had few concerns about having peers view their teaching.

In these schools, traditional teacher evaluation policies were more often seen as intrusions into the fabric of school life. Principals spoke about a positive model of growth rather than a deficit model of evaluation and they used their leadership skills to encourage and sustain a philosophy of learning. They spoke about teacher peers as experts in teaching rather than the evaluator as expert and they sought to ensure that veteran teachers had sufficient experiences of positive professional support to be able to overcome previous negative evaluative experiences.

Teachers were encouraged to explore how they could improve the learning experiences of their students and many identified student feedback as crucial in helping to examine their practices. Teachers' professional development was based on their willingness and ability to reflect on what had happened during their teaching day and to be open to the comments and suggestions of others, whether students or colleagues.

The support necessary to sustain appropriate contexts for teachers' professional growth depended on leadership at the school and district levels. While such school cultures can develop from the efforts of all educators on staff, strong support from the system administrators helped to foster those situations. This support allowed school administrators to work directly with their staffs in the ways they thought best. At the same time, through their own evaluations by the system administrators they were provided with expectations, support and encouragement for their efforts. In a number of case studies, principals whose staffs had chosen to develop learning cultures were frustrated that their central office administrators expected them to provide teacher evaluations which were based on procedures they no longer supported. They knew that their superintendents appreciated their efforts but they saw little evidence that principal colleagues were being encouraged to develop in a similar fashion.

Some principals who were frequent visitors to classrooms did not separate the formal teacher evaluation process from their ongoing supervision of all that happened in schools because, for them, a teacher evaluation that focused on basic competencies and required a set of formal visits and conferences was a waste of time. They were equally certain that the embedding of teacher professional development in the culture of the school was essential to enhance student learning and teacher satisfaction. Some principals made a number of formal visits every year but others used their frequent informal visits to monitor the learning atmosphere of the classrooms. All felt that they had sufficient information from these visits and from parents and students to be able to identify potential problem situations.

Unlike colleagues who spoke of the lack of time and the need to deal with administrative matters, these administrators went into classrooms frequently. They talked to teachers and students. They helped teachers establish school and individual goals and discussed these in one-on-one situations with their teachers. They organized speakers for in-service sessions or school visits for staff, and obtained additional resources to help staff meet these goals. They also recognized that, in many instances, while they could address basic teaching competencies, and were able to gather observational data for teachers, colleagues were the teachers' preferred source of ideas and support. Some deliberately involved everyone in learning more about specific educational initiatives. Teachers described these principals as resource people, open, willing and involved, and they liked and trusted them. By their actions these principals helped teachers transform their teaching and in the process were transformed themselves.

Observations

The information provided in the case studies and through the document analysis, questionnaire and interview surveys is very detailed and on first reading highly diverse. Each teacher, administrator and stakeholder tells a different story. These stories are complicated further by respondents' previous experiences and their relationships with their principals and other colleagues in their present schools. On further reading, these details, which initially seem to prevent any coherence, are gradually dissolved as the understandings beneath the evaluation experiences surface. The policies and practices which are based on a deficit model of teacher performance separate from those experiences where competence is accepted and growth is the expected outcome. Sometimes this can happen within a single school for specific staff, but even these growth oriented experiences are limited when learning for all is not part of the culture of the school. While the points we have learned about practices under the present policy are discussed next under two headings these groupings should not be seen as dichotomies. Rather, the points, themselves could be considered as markers to assess present practices and future directions.

Prevalent Practices of Teacher Evaluation

The points in this section refer to teacher evaluation policies which mandate classroom observations to obtain information on a set of criteria which are designed to answer both public concerns for accountability and teachers' desires for instructional improvement. This is similar to the teaching as technical expertise metaphor described in the literature review (Wise et al., 1985). An alternative model which emphasizes reflection and collaboration is provided by Garman (1986).

- Evaluation for accountability resulted in administrators visiting classrooms. Teachers wanted more visits of an informal nature to share what was happening and to discuss optional instructional approaches and strategies.
- Administrators identified weak teachers through informal channels rather than through formal evaluations.
- Teachers liked the self-reflective aspect of teacher evaluations. They acknowledged that it ensured that they reviewed their practices.
- Teachers disliked surprise visits for formal evaluations; they preferred to be informed fully on what the evaluator was gathering data, what standards would be used, and when the visits would be.
- The evaluation process was of little utility when either mutual trust is fragile or absent, or the evaluator was not considered sufficiently expert to be of help.
- The potential for teacher instructional improvement was focused on basic skill development, useful for some neophyte teachers and generally not appreciated by veteran teachers.
- Administrators felt pressed for sufficient time to add formal visits to their daily routine. Some chose this as a priority; others questioned whether the benefits were worth the effort.
- Evaluation for instructional improvement was limited by the infrequency of the evaluators' visits, their lack of understanding of the specific classroom context, their emphasis on the observation of basic skills, and their lack of subject matter expertise.
- Veteran teachers wanted the teacher evaluation process to be focused on their professional growth. These teachers learned most from their own students' progress and feedback, and from talking to colleagues with similar subject matter expertise and recent classroom experience.
- In most schools, professional growth was left largely to individual teachers. There was little school focus on teachers learning cooperatively. Professional development was confined to occasional staff meetings and system-wide inservice sessions on varied topics.

Practices That Emphasize Professional Growth

In this section, the points refer to experiences in jurisdictions or schools where the teacher evaluation policy and procedures encouraged teachers, as a part of their regular duties, to expand their professional expertise. Teachers in these situations were considered competent and there was a separate set of procedures for teachers who were lacking basic teaching competencies. This emphasis on personal growth is closely related to the teaching as professional judgment metaphor discussed in the literature review (Wise et al., 1985). Other writers who propose models for professional growth include Glatthorn (1990), Glickman (1990), and Sergiovanni (1991).

- Teachers felt in control of their own learning when they developed individual plans for their professional growth. Such individual plans helped focus their efforts and did not require the separation of teacher, teaching and subject matter competence.
- Administrators believed teachers were competent and acted out of that belief. This belief was present in all the administrators' actions connected with the school and not only to teacher evaluation.

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- Teacher evaluation was not a process separate from other processes in the school. It was an on-going process which fostered both teacher growth and school goals and was embedded in the culture of the school.
- Teacher growth was individually initiated but collaboratively shared. Teachers worked and learned together. They reported sharing ideas and materials and visiting each other's classrooms.
- The school culture was learner centred and emphasized active learning. The staff modelled learning for the students.
- Teachers held high expectations of each other concerning on-going professional development in order to achieve agreed upon school goals related to improved learning environments.
- Central office administrators worked cooperatively with principals and facilitated the actions of school staffs.
- Teachers enjoyed teaching and working together to enhance student options for success. They invited the administrator to assist in data gathering on their instructional practices or to help them reassess classroom situations.
- Although not all teachers were willing to become involved in such situations, these schools were places where teachers considered themselves to be partners rather than the hired help.
- Teachers regardless of their specialization were able to participate in cooperative activities which enhanced their professional expertise.

Implications for Action

Because the study findings stress the limitations of the present teacher evaluation practices, the use of a single evaluation format to identify incompetence and simultaneously promote instructional improvement should be reconsidered. Instead, policies which are based on an assumption of teacher competence would do much to make evaluation a positive process. The exploration of alternative school-based initiatives which encourage and sustain teacher professional growth is recommended. Also, school-based initiatives have to be supported by system-wide practices for professional development and sustained by a compatible jurisdictional philosophy. There are many types of organizational, school and individual models of professional growth which take into consideration teachers' varying levels of instructional competence, adult development, and cognitive complexity. Practices which recognize teachers' differences as well as providing opportunities for collaboration should be examined.

In terms of their present policies on teacher evaluation, most jurisdictions could retain but continue to refine their teacher evaluation policies for teachers who are in their first year in the profession or in the jurisdiction, and for teachers requiring particular assistance; however, the routine evaluation of competent teachers using prevalent teacher evaluation practices should be reassessed. Instead, practices that consider teachers as partners in the development of school cultures which promote learning and those that encourage teachers to take initiatives to improve their instructional practices and the learning environment for students should become widely adopted. Since no single set of evaluation procedures is appropriate for all contexts or for all teachers, jurisdictions, in cooperation with teachers, central office administrators, and trustees, should attempt to develop policies which meet the needs of teachers for professional growth and the need of the public to be assured of quality education.

To assist in the reexamination of the present practices of teacher evaluation, and to encourage discussion on teacher evaluation for quality education and teacher professional growth among all sectors of the educational community, the following specific suggestions for action are provided. They have been divided into provincial, jurisdictional, school level and university initiatives.

Provincial Initiatives

Educational agencies in Alberta should undertake to do the following:

1. Disseminate the full report and initiate discussions among all levels of the educational system to consider the findings.
2. Help others recognize that the teacher evaluation process is complex and that policies on teacher evaluation must reflect this complexity.
3. Review the current provincial policy on teacher evaluation in light of the findings of the study but continue to allow for variations at the jurisdictional level.
4. Establish partnerships that would promote professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.
5. Encourage initiatives that would raise awareness of system-wide, school-based, and individual practices that foster teacher growth.

Jurisdictional Initiatives

Each school district, school division and county in Alberta, working with teachers, school administrators, and central office staff, should undertake to do the following:

6. Engage in a substantive review of their teacher evaluation and related policies in light of the findings of this study.
7. Establish and sustain school and jurisdictional cultures that encourage collaboration and collegial initiatives which promote learning for students and educators.
8. Recognize that while there are important differences in school culture and that flexibility and diversity among school cultures should be acknowledged all schools should promote learning for students and staff.
9. Provide professional growth opportunities for school-based educators within their school contexts to enhance collaboration among staff members.
10. Ensure that all school, and where appropriate, system administrators have a current understanding of teacher evaluation and professional growth strategies and processes.
11. Engage in the enhancement of learning cultures among central office educators to model the importance of professional growth for all employees.
12. Help disseminate the substantive content of this report to school-based educators and their communities and solicit feedback relative to a review of local policy and practice.
13. Ensure that all board members have the opportunity to enhance their understanding about the issues of fairness and natural justice which inform their teacher evaluation policies.

School Initiatives

Working together, teachers, administrators and other school-based educators should undertake the following:

14. Provide on-going opportunities for teacher growth which are consistent with recommendations from the professional development literature.
15. Establish school cultures and goal directed activities which focus on improvement in student and staff learning.
16. Visit classrooms informally and frequently so that teaching becomes a less isolated and more collaborative activity.
17. Establish and sustain school cultures that encourage collaboration and collegial initiatives among staff members.
18. Adjust timetables or consider other means to provide release time for teacher collaboration.
19. Engage teachers in discussions about teaching and learning.
20. Promote initiatives which help novice teachers collaborate with colleagues.

University Initiatives

Faculties of Education should undertake the following:

21. Foster the development of teacher education models which encourage student teachers to work with each other and with groups of experienced teachers in mentoring relationships.
22. Link faculty members more closely with professional development activities focused on improving teacher evaluation in Alberta.
23. Broadly advertise to the educational community those university programs directed at providing educational leadership and professional development opportunities.

Adoption of a teacher evaluation policy by Alberta Education in 1984 raised expectations in the educational community that the process would result in the enhancement of teaching, and expectations among the public that the question of teacher incompetence would be resolved. The provincial policy was sufficiently open to allow jurisdictions to tailor their practices to the local settings. The general belief was that the individually designed practices developed within, and as a result of, provincial guidelines would achieve these two objectives. Expectations were so high, they were unrealizable. However, advances have been made as a result of genuine efforts on the part of teachers and administrators to undertake the process of teacher evaluation.

Although many study participants felt that the implementation of the specific jurisdictional teacher evaluation policies fell short of what had been hoped for, overall, the stakeholders surveyed in this large-scale study perceived positive gains in the period since 1984. Teachers in general accepted that evaluation was necessary on grounds of public accountability but were disappointed that the aim of professional growth through enhancement of instruction had not been achieved for many of them. Trustees were concerned that the issue of incompetence had not yet been fully addressed.

The processes of teaching and learning are complex. There is, therefore, no single or easy means for improving instruction in the schools. The implementation of a teacher evaluation policy cannot resolve all issues associated with inadequate teaching and instructional improvement. But some impact has been made and that is reassuring. The study ends with a number of recommendations for four educational arenas: the province, individual jurisdictions, schools, and faculties of education. While many of the recommendations are concerned with the development of collaborative cultures, the importance of individual commitment to the process cannot be overlooked. All educators as individuals, must commit to become involved in a process which can foster and sustain an excitement about teaching and ensure quality education for all Alberta's students.

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